SINISM

A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE WORLD-VIEW

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A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE WORLD-VIEW

BY
HERRLEE GLESSNER CREEL,
Ph. D. (Chicago)

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FOREWORD

New terms are always, and rightly, judged unnecessary and superfluous until they have been proved to meet a genuine need and to fill an otherwise empty place in the lexicon. It is with full awareness of this fact, and from no mere caprice, that the writer has seen fit to coin the word "Sinism." A detailed description of its meaning and explanation of why it is used will be found in Chapter III. Here it must suffice to explain that the term is used to denote a peculiarly Chinese world-view, which, although it has been in constant evolution, is traceable as a psychological culture-center through all of the millenia of Chinese history of which we have any clear knowledge.

The use of translations of Chinese texts is, as everyone working in the field knows, a very difficult matter. Ancient Chinese is very terse; literal translation into a European language is often impossible. Translation must vary, in such a case, to emphasize one or another shade of meaning, according to one's purpose at the time. For this reason it has been found necessary to make many slight alterations in the passages herein which are quoted from translations. But the instances of this have been so numerous, and the changes so slight, that to devote a footnote to each one would have been to complicate matters beyond all reason. It will be understood, then, that any barbarities of English and any inaccuracies of translation occurring in such quoted passages are to be charged to the present writer, and not to the original translator until investigation shall prove otherwise.

This manuscript has been written under the constant guidance of Professor A. E. Haydon. It is to his precepts of method and the inspiration of his scholarship that whatever of merit it may contain is due. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Berthold Laufer for his sug-

gestions as to bibliography and his generosity in allowing me to use books in his private library.

My wife's aid, with material, manuscript, and proof, has been invaluable. Mr. H. W. Cartwright, of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and Mr. Roger Dow have been kind enough to read and criticize the manuscript. My thanks are due to Professor Martin Sprengling for help of a special nature.

To Dr. S. Y. Chan, now of Ling Nan University, my teacher for all too short a period, I owe what insight I may have acquired into the Chinese language and culture. He is not responsible, however, for inaccuracies in the present volume, since it has been impossible to have the advantage of his criticism.

The writer is fully aware that for an American student even to attempt a study such as this one partakes of the nature of presumption. His original intention was only to make a detailed study of Chinese popular religion as mirrored in the *Lun Hêng*. Once started, however, the course of investigation led him irresistibly, sometimes even against his will, to the conclusions contained herein. It is in a spirit of proper humility that they are submitted, after verification by every available means, to the testing fires of more general criticism.

HERRLEE GLESSNER CREEL.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.
AUGUST 2, 1929.

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PART I

THE BACKGROUND OF SINISM

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

THE task which it is proposed to carry out in this study is an investigation of the origins and development of Chinese thought, from the earliest period about which we can reasonably speculate down through the period of the classical philosophical systems. It will immediately be objected that such an achievement is hardly possible in so brief a study, but is rather a labor for a lifetime of investigation deposited in a shelf of volumes. This would be true, if this study presumed to treat exhaustively of each separate period and each individual thinker as such. It does not. The modern emphasis on specialization for efficiency in scientific research carries with it, however, the necessity of correlation in order that perspectives may be preserved and enlarged. It is to this latter task that this study is directed.

We shall have occasion, to be sure, to go in some detail into the features of some of the most important developments in Chinese philosophy and religion, but always the emphasis will be rather on placing particular thinkers and ideas in their setting with relation to the main stream of Chinese thought than on any detailed description of these phenomena themselves. Indeed, we must go back still further, and ask if there *is* any such thing as a "stream" of Chinese thought, or if it is rather, as a few sinologists have seemed to feel, a kind of trough into which various individuals have from time to time poured ideas originated almost *in vacuo,* following which has ensued a period of degeneration. It may be confessed here that the general thesis of this study (arrived at, not *a priori,* but as the fruit of research) is that there does exist a definite and peculiarly Chinese world-view, the history of whose development may be traced at least in outline. Further, each of the more im-

portant thinkers and ideas within our period has originated, not outside of nor in opposition to this background, but rather as an expression of it and a development within it.

At the outset may one be pardoned for recalling a platitude of modern historical method which, like other things taken for granted, may easily be neglected in practice? When we study any particular culture our most fruitful approach is to look at it, in so far as we possibly can, from the inside. In approaching things Chinese we must attempt, first of all, to appropriate to ourselves the Chinese point of view, so that we regard any particular thing not as a Westerner would, nor even as a Hindu, but as a Chinese.[1] This need is well illustrated by the Chinese word *hsing* 行, often translated "element." The five *hsing* are wood, fire, metal, water, and earth. Immediately the Western reader is likely to equate these with the Greek elements. But those were relatively inert; the *hsing* on the other hand are very active. Other meanings of the same character include: "road, conduct, behavior, actions, walk, move, perform, do." One is tempted, again, to make a hasty conclusion and to equate these "elements" with the very active electron-composed substances of modern physics. But again he would be mistaken, for *hsing* is a Chinese idea, equivalent to no Western idea, and must be thoroughly studied and understood in its own setting before it may intelligently be used as a concept.

Especial caution, that we may keep from reading in our own interpretations, is necessary in dealing with the Chinese thought-world. Ancient China enjoyed an unique physical isolation from the rest of the world. "Desert, mountain, and sea had conspired together and presented an almost insurmountable barrier to human intercourse."[2] This geographical separation has had its very definite intellectual counterpart. If one wished to make an extreme statement, he might even contend that ancient India, the Mesopotamian world, the Mediterranean world, and Europe shared (within the widest limits of variation) one system of human thought, while ancient China presents us with another. Here lies one of the greatest values of the study of Chinese history; many ideas which have been thought "universal," and have been referred to the

[1] This does not mean, of course, that I carry the insistence on cultural atomism to the point to which Oswald Spengler does, holding that borrowing between cultures is absolutely impossible. This is to press a good principle entirely too far.

[2] James B. Pratt, *"The Pilgrimage of Buddhism."* p. 272.

"psychological unity of mankind," must abdicate this position when the Chinese touchstone is applied.

The fact remains that many of the earlier studies of Chinese religion in particular were made by men who recognized but little the existence of a peculiar Chinese mode of thought, if indeed they did not deny the very possibility. Three reasons for this may be mentioned. The first is the inaccessibility of the country. The second is the difficulty of the language.[3] Third, since these conditions prevented the early entry of unbiased scholars, in any number, into the Chinese field, the initial task of interpretation of Chinese history, philosophy, and religion was left almost entirely to Christian missionaries, men who by their very calling were usually unqualified for the labor of objective and critical scholarship. As a result, the Chinese Classics are still known to the West largely through the translations of such men as James Legge. One can have only admiration for the conscientious industry which Legge gave to his pioneering tasks, but that does not prevent the wish that they might have been performed by some one less determined to harmonize Chinese history with the book of *Genesis*.[4] Ancient Chinese is a language which can not be translated literally into another tongue. The translator must be to some extent an interpreter. Such a situation is paradise for the man with a theory.

The unfortunate sequel has been that when more competent investigators, free from such bias, entered the field, they took over, to some extent, this distortion of Chinese ideas. Thus, for instance, M. Granet translates *shên* as "dieu," but since this does not fit in other places (it does not fit precisely, anywhere) he must translate the same word differently. The same is true of *shê* which he translates sometimes as "dieu du sol," sometimes otherwise, although the meaning in Chinese is the same. All this is most confusing. It is hoped that the reader will bear with the alternative which has been adopted for this study, of first defining such genuinely untranslatable terms and thereafter using the phonetic transliteration to denote them.

In order to understand any Chinese idea or any Chinese thinker,

[3] This is partially due to the fact that the teaching of Chinese to foreigners has not yet been developed to the efficiency which prevails in the teaching of European tongues. It may be hoped that in the near future, as a result of labors now going forward, learning Chinese will be considered by no means an insurmountable task.

[4] Cf. Legge, *Shu King* (in *Chinese Classics*) (referred to hereafter as *Shu*) p. 189.

we must have some comprehension of the Chinese thought-world as a whole, and of its history. Manifestly, this requires that we shall start with the very earliest data which we can find, and work from that point. We are faced with the difficult task of evaluating those of the Chinese records which pretend to tell us of remote antiquity.

Western scholars are very cautious in making any statement of fact for China prior to, say, the time of Confucius. Chinese scholars in general are, of late, hesitant about affirming anything concerning their early history. Almost any hypothesis may be proved or disproved on what may seem fairly good authority. Almost all documents are suspect. Granet throws overboard nearly the whole of early Chinese literature, in so far as it is supposed to record historical events.[5]

A hopeless situation? For accurate political history, perhaps. Certainly a discouraging situation, from any point of view. Yet, it is the obstacles to be overcome which give zest to any game, from chess to research. In any case, we are certainly faced with a situation calling for a peculiar method of approach. For myself, I am unable to place much faith in specific dates and events prior to the time of Confucius, and almost none in those anterior to the founding of the Chow dynasty (1122 ? B. C.). Yet this does not make the writing of cultural, intellectual, and religious history by any means impossible. For instance: If we find in the book called *The Tribute of Yu* that a certain tribe sent earth of five colors as a tribute, it may make little difference whether Yu or the tribe ever existed; the important point for us is that if we can establish an approximate date for the document, we shall know that the five colors as a concept existed at that time (barring later interpolation, of course). And at any rate this provides us with one more evidence of the existence, at whatever date, of an important element of the Chinese natural philosophy.

It is the first task of this study to set forth the complex of natural and religious philosophy as it existed in China a little before the time of Confucius. To do that, we shall have to go into remote origins, and there we shall be on doubtful ground. But this will not seriously endanger the final result, for, while the historical chronology of a people may be falsified and garbled past recognition in a literature, *it is literally impossible that a literature of the scope and variety of the Chinese could be pervaded by a single type of*

[5] *Cf.* Marcel Granet, *Danses et Legendes de la Chine Ancienne* (noted hereafter as *Danses*) p. 1.

philosophy if that philosophy had not been, as a matter of fact, a dominating factor in the life of the people.

No argument is required to show that the question of the original home of the Chinese people is of importance for our problem. If as Legge believes they are descendants of Noah who moved eastward after the incident at Babel, if they came from Egypt, or if they were immigrants from ancient Babylon, these facts will give us a key to the interpretation of their philosophy. But even the question of when they entered the territory we know as China is one to which, as Henri Cordier wrote in 1915, we may never know the answer. It is comforting to reflect that we do have at least one specific date; according to Schlegel, the oldest astronomical observation in the world was made and recorded in China, that of the eclipse of the sun on May 7, 2165 B. C. This implies, of course, that the people making the observation had reached a very considerable degree of advancement.

A detailed summary of the more important research on the question of Chinese origins will be found in the *T'oung Pao* for 1915, pp. 577-603. Two general theories seem to have taken the field, one being that the Chinese have been in their present situation from highest antiquity, the other that they migrated to China from a previous westward home. With the latter theory is usually, but not always, combined the contention that they were herders during and prior to the migration.

These two theories are sometimes associated, and used to account for the undoubtedly composite origin of the Chinese. It is held, then, that a portion of the people came in as warlike, pastoral nomads, conquered the people they found in the land, and settled among them as a ruling caste. If we could accept this explanation it would certainly solve several of our knottiest problems, as we shall have occasion to see. But a theory is not correct *merely* because it is convenient.

The arguments for a pastoral "stage" in Chinese history are not convincing.[6] It used to be believed that, just as people passed first from martial promiscuity through the matriarchate, then through a patriarchal stage, so they went from hunting to herding and thence to agriculture. Both are exploded theories, in so far

[6] In support of the pastoral theory see Kwen Ih Tai, *An Inquiry into the Origin and Early Development of T'ien and Shang-ti* (Ph.D. Thesis, Chicago), pp. 138-160. For the primitive agricultural theory, see H. F. Rudd, *Chinese Social Origins*, p. 55.

as they were thought to be universally applicable. In aboriginal North and Middle America, herding never reached any development worthy of mention, while the agricultural achievements of the Indian are probably his chief contribution to civilization.

The excavations of J. G. Andersson, of the Geological Survey of China, have led him to the conclusion that the Chinese of the aeneolithic period must have maintained an economy in which agriculture played a predominant rôle. He is led to this conclusion by his discovery of large permanent village-sites, evidences of textiles, and evidence that the people of the period kept large numbers of swine.

In regard to the whole question of the place of origin of the early Chinese and the mode of their early life, we must be willing to maintain suspended judgment. While this is written, researches are going forward which may, at any time, put our knowledge on firmer ground; when this happens we may expect that several other mysteries, of the greatest importance for the history of the whole human race, will be cleared up at the same time. But lack of dogmatic certainty on this point need not prevent us from building an interpretation of ancient Chinese thought, which, we may be reasonably confident, will not be invalidated no matter what may be the results of future research in the field of origins. Good scientific theories should be constructed, when possible, on the plan of Japanese dwellings—flexible enough so that they can stand an earthquake or two in the substructure without being shaken completely to pieces.

After all, what precise difference would it have made in the world-view of the people, at the earliest time at which we know them, if they had been nomadic cattle-raisers in some remote antiquity? Even Dr. Tai, an enthusiastic proponent of the pastoral theory, tells us that the composition of the *Book of Odes* (which must have been well before the time of Confucius) "was after the Chinese people had occupied China and had adapted themselves to the geographical environment for several thousand years. We need not be surprised to find that *the agricultural civilization had by this time thoroughly permeated the thought and expression of everyday life.*"[7] (Italics mine).

We know well enough what happens to the religion and the philosophy of a pastoral people which settles down to an agricultural

[7] Tai, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

mode of life. Some elements of their old religion are re-interpreted to fit the new situation; those which do not adapt themselves are dropped. Such a transitional situation runs through almost the whole of the *Old Testament.* But we have an even more concrete example just south of China, in India. The religion of the *Vedas* is that of a group of pastoral nomads. They moved into India, and took over an agricultural and settled economy. Certain of the old gods, as *Varuna,* which had been very important to them as nomads, no longer contributed to their new way of living, and were practically forgotten. But *Indra,* who was unimportant when they were herders, brought rain; his importance to farmers is obvious, and he was, in fact, raised to a place of the first rank. On the basis of such facts, and with the independent knowledge of the Chinese situation which we possess, we are justified in laying this question of pastoral origin to one side for the present, and in proceeding to make our interpretation on the basis of an agricultural economy.

We have plenty of material, if we are willing to accept it all, to make a picture of Chinese life as it was at the beginning of the Chow dynasty. If we can accept the *Great Plan,* as it stands in the present text of the *Shu King,*[8] as actually dating from 1024 B. C. (a point which is far from being definitely established) we can even say that the whole foundation and a good deal of the superstructure of later Chinese philosophy and religion existed at that time. It is highly probable that this is the case. To penetrate beyond this date is difficult. We have many, too many, pieces of the puzzle; some we must reject as obviously incongruous. What shall we do with the remainder? We are in the realm of hypothesis, and must use deduction for lack of a better method.

Of the apparently genuine materials before us, which *seem* most likely to have appeared first? The five household *shên*[9] 神 and the Sacred Place (Granet's "Lieu Saint") appear to meet the specifications. The five *shên* are the outer door, the inner door, the well,

[8] *Shu King* means, literally, "Document Classic." This book is the collection of records which makes up the orthodox history of the Confucian school. Like most other ancient Chinese books, it has had a checkered history. Much of it, at least, is of doubtful age.

[9] *Shên* is a word of wide occurrence. It is sometimes translated "god" which is thoroughly misleading. "Spirit" is better, but still inaccurate in many contexts. It is sometimes used as an adjective, meaning "unusual" or "weird," though not "supernatural" in the Western sense.

In the present application the word means little more than the objects themselves, capable of acting to help or harm the household.

the hearth, and the atrium.[10] These are the focal points of interest about the home, and most of them, at least, very soon take on "super-usual" significance among any settled people. We find sacrifices, the beginning of which is unknown, made to them at specified times.[11] The Sacred Place (as representing Earth) is closely linked to the five *shên* both by Chavannes and by Wang Ch'ung[12] (1,510). This is to class the five *shên* as *yin*, since earth is the very essence of *yin*. In both cases, however, the classification is based on a considerable development of the *yin-yang* philosophy,[13] a fairly sophisticated set of ideas which, since we seek origins, we can hardly assume as an original datum. This association may more plausibly be explained on the assumption that both the five *shên* and the Sacred Place were, at an early period, part of a naïve agricultural cult closely bound to the earth. The elements of this cult would then have been loosely grouped with the Earth side of the later Heaven-Earth duality. In this later system, it must be remembered, Earth as *yin* is female, yet Wang associates the hearth (seat of fire, which is the essence of *yang*, the male principle) with it. Furthermore, the sacred mound, *shê* 社 which is the very focalization of the agricultural powers of earth, often figures as *masculine*.[14] Obviously, we have here certain tell-tale incongruencies which indicate very strongly that the more recent system was built on the basis of an earlier cult.

This mound, the *shê* just mentioned, appears to have been the center of the life of the tiny agricultural village, which comprised, the records tell us, twenty-five "families" (this family included a kinship group of considerable size, of course, as is the case in China today). There is reason to believe that the cult centering about the *shê* is very ancient indeed, that it is, in fact, the central element of the hypothetical agricultural cult of which we have already

[10] It is impossible strictly to translate the Chinese phrase into English. This "atrium" is the space under the middle of the roof of the principal room, at which point was located an opening which served both as chimney and as window.

[11] Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 492.

[12] Wang Ch'ung, born 27 A. D., is one of the most interesting figures in the history of Chinese literature. In dealing with the popular religion we shall have occasion to consider him in detail. References in parenthesis refer to volume and page number of his *Lun Hêng* (in the English translation by Alfred Forke), one of our most valuable sources for the popular religion.

[13] This dual system of classification will be discussed in detail in the succeeding chapter.

[14] Chavannes, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-21.

spoken,[15] which preceded the philosophical "Heaven-Earth, *yin-yang*" complex. The reasons for this are several. For one, the mound seems to have included a tree, or perhaps even a sacred grove[16] But wood is that one of the five *hsing* which corresponds to the east, which is a *yang* region, which contradicts the *yin* status of the mound.

Furthermore, the place of the Earth in the later religion is decidedly subservient and secondary. But the *shê* of the ancient villages seem quite self-sufficient. They are gone to by the people for almost all of the things which they would have needed in a simple agricultural situation, such as crops, protection from drouth, and protection from floods. Further, the techniques used to gain these ends are easier to understand by themselves than to fit into the later philosophical scheme. Instances are the practice of putting five frogs on the mound to draw rain, and of moistening the mound from the irrigation ditch for the same purpose.[17] Water, like the *shê* is classed as *yin*. When we find that recourse is had to the mound in case of high water, we may feel that here is a proof for the philosophical theory. But when we find that the *shê* was also appealed to in case of drouth, we begin to suspect that the mound was far more important than the later scheme would represent it to have been.

Indeed, Wang Ch'ung seems rightly to have described the situation, in so far as the people are concerned, when he said, "It is customary to sacrifice to the *shê* which produce all things." (II, 337). Anciently, the common people looked, for the things they wanted, to Earth, not generically but in the form of the *shê*. In the documents, Heaven is respected, sometimes feared, but Earth is loved and venerated (I, 535, II, 337, 339, 376-7). From the very first appearance of Heaven in the literature, it is remote, just, ethical, almost a philosophical concept rather than an element of a simple religion. Heaven seems almost to be a transcendentalization of the governmental and regulatory function. Earth, on the other hand, is close, intimate, bountiful—the old concept of the *shê*, in fact, will not fit into the later cosmological scheme without that alteration which, as we shall see, it underwent.

But one of the chief reasons why it seems impossible that the

[15] Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 437, p. 524. Granet, *La Religion des Chinois* (cited hereafter as *Religion*), p. 63.

[16] Chavannes, *op. cit.*, p. 466-70, p. 485. Granet, *Religion*, p. 68.

[17] Chavannes, *op. cit.* p. 495.

shê originated simply as a personification of the *yin* comes from the fact that it is very easy to account for its origin in a manner which does not require that we throw the sophisticated philosophy of a later day back into a setting where it looks like a top-hat on a coolie.[18] On the other hand, the *yin-yang* philosophy itself appears, without forcing, as a natural development out of the early village life and agricultural cult on the one hand, and the later political developments on the other.

The village life is very important, for it appears to be the archetype from which the entire Chinese conception of the world and even the cosmos grew. The village was, as has been said, small. It was based on agriculture. It was apparently, a community of a peaceful regularity and a social solidarity beyond anything which we of the present day can imagine.[19] Rudd has summarized the climatic situation admirably.

> The Chinese civilization appeared in a region of extensive plains and low hills, located in the temperate zone between the parallels of 30° and 40° north latitude. The earth offers but few such favorable situations for the development of great peoples. No other ancient civilization had such freedom for extensive and intensive development. The cold winters and hot summers offered stimulus and reward for personal effort. Industry was necessary in order to secure food and comfort. The soil was naturally productive. The rainfall was not abundant, but it came at the seasons when it was most needed for agriculture, and stimulated the effort to utilize it when it came.[20]

To this day, the sense of solidarity among the members of a Chinese "large family" has few parallels in the West. In these ancient agricultural villages there was "une sorte de gregarisme, une vie en groupes, en communautés où individus et familles doivent se perdre et ne comptent pas."[21] Again, "Une village enferme une

[18] That I be not thought wilfully to ignore the fact, let me acknowledge that the practice of putting a red cord about the *shê* in case of drought does appear to be an example of the *yin-yang* philosophy. But it can not be proved that this was early. To be sure, Chavannes (*op. cit.* p. 485) says that the string was at first put about the tree rather than the mound, which seems to refer the practice to antiquity. But Chavannes' source for this dates from 500 A. D.

[19] I do not mention the nine-field scheme (*cf.* Maspero, *La Chine Antique*, p. 108-10) for three reasons. (1) Considerable doubt of its authenticity has been raised of late, especially in China. (2) It can not have been in existence at any time prior to the existence of fairly well-recognized government. (3) It is of no very great importance for this study.

[20] Rudd, *op. cit.*, p. 63. [21] Maspero, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

vaste famille tres unie et trés homogène.[22] This solidarity took on not alone a social but even a territorial aspect. Indeed, Granet holds that the relations of the family group with the soil were originally so close that the corpse was deposited on the family ground, near the dwelling, during decomposition, and each new member of the family was considered a literal reincarnation of the substance of the ancestors.[23] He finds, also, an association of the fertility of the grain, which was stored near the conjugal couch, with that of the women.[24]

But the most striking fact about the life of the village-dweller was the division of his year into two seasons, according to which almost every phase of his existence was drastically altered.[25] In summer, the whole family went to the fields, and lived in little huts at the scene of the agricultural labors. The work in the fields was done by the men, the women and children preparing their meals and bringing them to the field. This condition continued all through the summer. After the harvest was gathered, the mode of life was changed altogether, the whole group going back to the home to spend the cold winter. Here it was the women, apparently, who did the large share of the work, making clothing, etc.[26]

The turn of the season, in spring and fall, would quite evidently be a time of great importance. It was the time, in each case, when the season of the labors of one sex had finished, and when that of another was to begin. In the spring there was all of the anxiety over the crops of the coming year, and the rejoicing at the return of vegetation; in the autumn there was gladness because of the harvest. Beyond doubt we have here the origin of the two great festivals of the ancient Chinese, which came approximately at the equinoxes. It is worthy of note that, at the spring festival, there were ceremonies celebrated at the Sacred Place (which was perhaps the early form of the *shê*)[27] in which, apparently, young men and young women danced opposite each other (dramatizing the opposition of the sexes), singing ceremonial songs. They finally paired off, the climax being sexual intercourse. This was followed by marriage if a child resulted.[28]

[22] Granet, *Religion,* p. 4.
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 27-28.
[24] *Ibid.* p. 26.
[25] Maspero, *op. cit.,* p. 114.
[26] *Ibid.,* p. 116. Granet, *Religion,* p. 3-4.
[27] Granet, *Danses,* p. 447-50.
[28] Granet, *Religion,* pp. 8-16. Maspero, *op. cit.* pp. 118-19.

The opposition of the sexes in this ancient agricultural life is striking. It is so sharp, Granet opines, that it may be said to have dominated the whole of the social life. We find what is perhaps an echo of it in the separation of the sexes among the aristocracy.[29]

Granet was the first, to my knowledge, to point out the very great probability that the *yin* and the *yang* conceptions were originally merely the classification of objects in general under these two categories (male and female) which were most ready to the hand of the ancient farmer.[30] It must be borne in mind that it is not contended that the developed *yin-yang* cosmology existed among the early agricultural Chinese—rather the contrary—but only that this division on sex lines is probably the source of the later philosophical concepts. Granet believes that *yin* at first referred to the position taken by the female dancers in the spring festival, while *yang* referred to the proper place of the male dancers.

Other aspects of the village life which had an overwhelming importance for the latter Chinese religion and philosophy were the social solidarity, already mentioned, and the intense provincialism which characterized it. This is not alone peculiar to agricultural communities located in China. Wherever such a group exists, it tends very quickly to achieve a code of ethics which is not subject to criticism, even the minutest violations of which are considered to be great offences. The origin of reflective, as opposed to hereditary, morality, lies in wide contacts, bringing criticism and comparison. The Chinese village lacked this. China as a whole has lacked and deliberately excluded it, from very ancient times down almost to the present. The result, reflected in the literature beyond all possibility of doubt, was the placing of the highest premium on conformity to custom down to the smallest detail.

The process went a step further. It is nothing unique for a people to believe that its religious rites cause the processes of the universe to follow their accustomed round. Nor is it unusual for people to believe that conformity or non-conformity with a particular ethical code has spectacular cosmic consequences. Most of us have heard some good person say, after a tremendous earthquake or fire, "What a wicked city that must have been!" The tendency

[29] Granet, *Danses,* p. 569.

[30] Granet, *Religion,* pp. 20-21. The etymology of the characters *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 is interestingly discussed by Granet.

to think in such terms increases as we approach conditions of village provincialism like that in ancient China. The Chinese developed this idea, in combination with certain other conceptions, into a religion, and a social and political and even a natural philosophy. As a result of this, almost every calamity which could happen was referred to the failure of some person or persons to live up to the established code.

The positive conceptions of the ideal state in this regard were *li* 禮 "propriety" and *h'u* 和 "harmony, union, concord, agreement." The former refers to the body of *mores* according to which it was necessary to live in order to win social approval and prosperity, and to avoid disturbing the order of the cosmos (conceived as including men on very intimate terms). The second term is very often used to denote that harmonious state of nature which was the normal and beneficial thing. In the beginning, these ideas were very simple. Men must follow the customs of the group in order to maintain both social and cosmic harmony. If they do not, they will bring upon the group (in a very naturalistically conceived way) such disasters as follow upon the disturbance of the harmonious rotation of the seasons, *i. e.*, drought, floods, crop failures, plagues of insects, etc.

This early Chinese thought-world was (if we do not push the word too far) dynamically conceived. The *hsing*, "elements,"[31] if they existed in the Chinese world at that time, were not so much types of substance, apparently, as *localizations of modes of action*. The Chinese never seem to deal with the epistemological problem; they are naïve realists, with a decidedly pragmatic tinge. In the same way they conceive "good" not as a type of substance but as a state of harmony. That which Westerners have called "supernatural" appears to differ from the "natural" not in substance but only in its way of action. Evil is not a substance nor a class of things, but a kind of behavior which is the opposite of harmonious, that is, *kuo* 過, "excess," "going beyond."

It may seem that the above paragraph attributes to the ancient Chinese a number of sophisticated philosophical ideas which would be, in a setting so naïve, surprising. But careful consideration will show that it rather denies to them certain ideas which the Westerner tends unconsciously to assume that the Chinese must have had, merely because they are implicit in his own occidental background.

[31] The date of their origin will be considered later.

We have traced the origin of the most important early ideas in the Chinese philosophical and religious world—on the one hand *yin* and *yang*, on the other the solidarity of the social with the cosmic order. But almost nothing has yet been said of *T'ien*, which is, according to some scholars, perhaps the most important ingredient of early Chinese religion. The neglect was not inadvertence. *T'ien* has been mentioned so little because it is believed that its importance, at this period, was very slight and secondary.

The importance of *T'ien* in early Chinese religion has probably been greatly overemphasized, for two reasons. In the first place by the time the Chinese were writing down their history in any sort of systematic manner, and were re-editing all of the old texts, the political system which depended on the *T'ien* concept (as completely as the Holy Roman Empire depended on *Jahweh*) was in full swing, and it was the officials of this system who wrote and edited the histories. Add to this the Chinese reverence for and imitation of antique custom, and it becomes plain that the officers would beyond all question have written a flourishing *T'ien*-cult into the ancient period, whatever the facts might have been.

In the second place, Western scholars, led in the first place by Christian missionaries, have often been eager to demonstrate the early importance of *T'ien*, usually in order to prove that monotheism was the original religion of China. Christianity then appears, of course, as the preservation of this original and pure cult through the ages. In any case they equate *T'ien* and *Shang Ti*[32] to *Jahweh*, and try to find them to have been as important as possible.

No one, Western scholar or Chinese, pretends to find any sort of popular cult of *T'ien* 天[33] within the historical period. But there was, undeniably, an early and flourishing cult of the *shê*, the five household *shên*, etc. Here was an embarrassing position for the historians. *T'ien* was considered the loftiest power in the universe and was associated with the Emperor himself, and therefore should, of course, have been the object of the most wide-spread and the most ancient veneration. Yet where was the proof of this? As is usual in such cases, a neat explanation was found.

This explanation, upon which some have based the antiquity

[32] *Shang Ti*, "Upper Ruler," is probably another form of *T'ien*. This point will be discussed later.

[33] This character seems to have developed from a picture of a man with a line (representing the sky) above his head. It is generally accepted to have originally meant merely the sky.

of the cult of *T'ien,* is founded upon a passage of the *Shu King,* dated about one thousand years after the event, referring to an incident in the reign of Yao, the first Emperor mentioned in the *Shu King.* The passage, taken from the document *Leu-hing* of the *Shu,*[34] reads:

> Then he commissioned Ch'ung and Le to make an end of the communications between earth and heaven, and the descents (*of spirits,* Legge interpolates) ceased. From the princes down to the inferior officers, all helped with clear intelligence *the spread* of the regular principles of duty. . .

Wieger, who of course shares the general Roman Catholic thesis of universal primitive monotheism, tells us that the situation lying behind this text was as follows: The primitive Chinese religion, the pure cult of *Tien,* had become contaminated through the contact of the people with certain non-Chinese tribes, the Li and the Miao. Shun was charged by the Emperor to punish them, with the result that, the *Shu* tells us, he exterminated them.[35] Further action was necessary, however. The people, not leaving the offering of sacrifices to the official channels, had begun to have personal relations with the superior powers, which threw the entire religious system into confusion. For this reason it was necessary "to make an end of the communications between earth and heaven." This caused the old order to be re-established, Wieger tells us, and it continued until about 770 B. C.

But, upon close examination, this incident does not at all show that a popular cult of *T'ien* existed at an early date. Wieger says that Shun revived the laws of the ancient cult; had it, therefore, been previously the custom for the people not to sacrifice to *T'ien,* but to leave this to the Emperor? If so, that would agree perfectly with my own hypothesis, that *T'ien* was never properly a deity of the people. On the other hand, it seems difficult to see how the prohibition of popular sacrifices to *T'ien* could have done away with the abuses which were supposed to have occurred. It would seem that the Emperor and his agents would rather have tried to stimulate the *T'ien*-cult, and to make it take the place of the supposedly heretical practices. Furthermore, Legge reports an extended dialogue concerning this passage, dating from the time of

[34] *Shu* p. 593.

[35] L. Wieger, S. J., *Histoire des Croyances Religieuses et des Opinions Philosophiques en Chine depuis l'Origine, jusqu'à Nos Jours* (cited hereafter as *Histoire des Croyances*), pp. 14-15.

Confucius, in which there is not the slightest hint that it has any reference to popular worship of *T'ien* at all.[36]

Another difficulty is worthy of note. How is it that this popular *T'ien*-cult, supposedly so strong up to this time, was extirpated in the full spotlight of history (as its proponents would have us believe) yet has left no echo of its existence in the rest of Chinese literature, not even in the *Shi King,* the *Book of Poetry,* which is our best source for popular sentiment? The point is not one on which to be stubbornly dogmatic, but until further evidence is produced I shall remain persuaded that *T'ien* was always a governmental figure, never a popular one. It is the aristocracy, not the people, who sacrifice to it. The fact is that all of this literature which concerns the early rulers of China is very doubtful. Some of its incidents can only be mythical, much is probably allegory. As collateral evidence it is often very good; as independent proof it is in most cases worthless. In this case the independent evidence nearly all points away from a popular cult of *T'ien.*

But suppose we concede that a *T'ien*-cult might have existed, deeply rooted in the popular imagination, from the earliest times. Could the Emperor have ended it with such ease, or even at all? He could not. Chinese emperors who try to introduce great innovations in religion have always lost their heads and their thrones to some ambitious vassal who has been watching for just such an opportunity to raise a pious rebellion.

But if *T'ien* was not always the great deity of the Chinese, we must account for its origin in some manner.[37] One may not ignore the very frequent association of nomadic peoples with sky-gods. From this fact comes, perhaps, the strongest argument for a pastoral nomadic period in the history of the Chinese.

> The earlier Heaven-cult did not include the earth as the counterpart of Heaven, and can not well be said to be a product of the peasant community. The agricultural feature was apparently added to the original ritual as the farming interest had been gradually developed to displace that of pastoral economy.[38]

One may not deny the possibility of a pastoral nomadic period, nor dogmatically assert that this might not be the origin of *T'ien.* It might. But the tendency of nomadic deities to atrophy in an

[36] *Shu,* pp. 593-94, notes.

[37] T'ai refers to "the undivided supremacy which *T'ien* had commanded over the people from time immemorial." *Op. cit.,* p. 233.

[38] *Ibid.,* p. 141a.

agricultural situation is, as has been pointed out, great, and is irresistible unless the old deities are able to take on new functions which fit into the new habitat and mode of life of their people. In China, *T'ien* did, in the course of time, assume functions of a governmental character, but one can hardly believe that this group of nomads (according to the hypothesis we are pursuing) can have moved into China and immediately set up a thoroughly organized government. Therefore, even if the origin of *T'ien* were nomadic, it seems probable that the concept would in any case have undergone an intermediate period of extreme feebleness.[39]

But if we eliminate the pastoral stage, we may still find an explanation for *T'ien*. The sky is important for the agricultor, as well as for the herdsman. It is from the sky that the rain comes, it is in the sky that the sun, all-important, is located. The sky becomes a symbol of the orderly rotation of the seasons, which is associated with that remarkably strong sense of Harmony and Order, social and cosmic, which, as we have seen, the Chinese developed.

The sky sees everything. Among many peoples it has become linked with justice and with government. It is often the seat of the Great Ruler, who is of course closely associated with the human king or emperor. So it was in China. This development, which can only be mentioned here, will be treated at length when we come to deal with Confucianism and its background.

The sky is active, sending driving rain and hot sunlight. The earth is passive, motionless, putting forth the fruit of the seed it receives. Quite simply, the male *yang* came to have its seat in heaven, while the female *yin* was naturally linked with earth.[40]

* * *

The foregoing picture is not presented as anything like a complete account of early Chinese religion or philosophy, nor even as a thorough canvass of all of the reliable material which is available on the subject. Many elements have been omitted, some because they are peripheral, others because they are included implicitly in what has been described. The chief purpose of this sketch has been to provide a background for, and an introduction to, the ensuing study of later Chinese thought.

[39] The only alternative would be the persistence among the settled people of a governing caste, or the penetration among them of a group of nomads who set up an aristocracy. See Granet's refutation of these possibilities, *Danses*, p. 9-24.

[40] The sun is sometimes called "the great *yang*."

CHAPTER II.

CHINESE NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

THIS chapter completes the first section of our study, which consists of a sketch of the background against which any intelligible picture of the development of the Chinese world-view must be thrown. We have reviewed, in the briefest way, what seem to have been the very early religious and philosophical ideas of the Chinese. We must now consider the broad conceptual outlines of Chinese thought, as it existed down to the end of our period, *i.e.*, to the first century A. D.

In presenting the varied materials with which we are dealing it is quite impossible to maintain a thoroughly logical order. It has seemed wisest to relinquish chronological sequence in favor of an arrangement which, it is hoped, causes that which precedes to help in the understanding of that which follows.

In undertaking to deal with Chinese natural philosophy we must bear well in mind the cautions of Chapter I. We must look at these Chinese ideas, not through Western eyes, but, in so far as it is at all possible, through Chinese eyes. We must try, then, first of all, to understand what this natural philosophy was to its Chinese authors.

We will not be dismayed by the fact that many Occidental philosophers, particularly certain of the German thinkers, would immediately rule this thinking out of court as no philosophy at all. For they refuse to recognize as philosophers any who do not use a great deal of their intellectual energy in grappling with the epistemological problem. But, as Prof. T. V. Smith has pointed out, the rise of idea-isms and of idealisms is usually associated with the desire to negate the world as it apparently is, in order to escape to a world

more flexible to human wishes—that it is, in other words, closely associated with a despair of attaining the good life here and now. But the ancient Chinese were peculiarly fortunately situated, and held steadfastly to the belief that it was possible to make this life, in this world, worth-while. Only the philosophic Taoists abandoned this position even to a degree, and it is precisely their philosophy which most reminds us of Western Idealism. It is surely no accident that in China, most favorable of lands for human life in ancient times, and in the United States, most prosperous of modern nations, similar types of pragmatic philosophy have been developed,[41] and that the latter have effected similarities even in such an element of culture as art.

The Chinese mind is primarily social. The true Chinese cosmos is, monotheistic propaganda of Christian missionaries to the contrary notwithstanding, anthropocentric, never theocentric. The corollary of this is that practical orientation of the Chinese mind which observers have so universally remarked. When the Chinese speculates, he is usually speculating for a purpose, and if he is not, his speculation will be disapproved by Chinese society.

To those of us who deplore the great apparent waste involved in the vast amount of often seemingly foolish speculation in which Western philosophers engage, this may seem a very desirable situation, yet it had its unfortunate results. Without this *narrow* practicality, this short-sighted and imperfect pragmatism, nothing could have prevented the rise of the scientific method in China by the beginning of the Christian era at the latest. Chinese thinkers were penetrating analysts, and they reasoned, in many cases, scientifically. Even experimentation was begun, among certain of the Taoist alchemists, with minerals, vegetables, and even animals, but this was forbidden by their brethren and even by the government, because they were wasting their time![42]

This should not be mistaken to mean that the Chinese were wholly ignorant of all but immediately practical matters. Curiosity is, seemingly, a universal characteristic of humanity, and Chinese literature shocks us periodically with bits of surprisingly accurate physical information which the Chinese possessed. For instance, Wang tells us that "Some people have measured the light of the

[41] The fact that Chinese thought is so congenial to our own leads to the reasonable hope that American sinologists may surpass the European in this department of research.

[42] Leon Wieger, *Taoisme,* Vol. I, p. 14.

sun and calculated his size. They found the diameter to be 1000 *li* (the *li* is about one-third of a mile) long." Far as this figure is from the one which we accept, it is still further removed from the appearance of the sun's size to the naked eye. These ancient Chinese were not inept at getting information they wanted, but on the whole they did lack scientific curiosity. On a point so easy to verify as the manner of the birth of the young of the hare, Wang Ch'ung tells us that they issue from the mouth of the mother! (I, 319).

The crux of the matter is that the ancient Chinese were on the whole neither systematic nor orderly thinkers. When a piece of information suggested itself as true, the only tests which seem to have been applied to it were (1) whether it *appeared* to have practical value, and (2) whether it obviously and flagrantly denied some particularly sacrosanct tenet already accepted as true. If the candidate for inclusion in truth could answer the first question affirmatively and the second question negatively, it became part of the body of things accepted as true. That great lacunae, and numerous mutual contradictions, must have grown up by the use of such methods, appears at once. They did, but because the Chinese did not try very thoroughly to systematize their information, they were unnoticed. The fact that we find Chinese philosophical information done up in neat bundles of five and seven and six factors, etc., does not modify the statement that the ancient Chinese were unsystematic. They were indefatigable cataloguers; they were not systematisers.

Coupled with this practical emphasis, as a leading principle of Chinese natural philosophy, is the fact that the Chinese physical world is a world of action as opposed both to a static world and to a world of substance. On the one hand, the Chinese world appears to be always in flux, to do little resting on any "eternal verities." On the other hand, we find, in the Chinese world, only one sort of substance, if indeed that be a substance at all. (This is a broad generalization, and such statements may usually be shown to have exceptions. There may well be individual variations from this position, although the writer knows of none.) Things are differentiated, not by the stuff of which they are composed, but by the way in which they act. Stuffs pass from a state of having one sort of properties to a state of having another; in the latter state they have a different name, but the only difference is one of activity. One wonders, indeed, whether (although an ancient Chinese would

never have thought of, let alone expressed this) the phenomenon is not, in ancient Chinese thought, identical with the noumenon. To say the same thing otherwise, the Chinese seem to have lacked a conception of substance, matter, as such,[43] since this can only exist as over against that which is not material. To the ancient Chinese thinker, the differences between things consist in degree of density (itself a kind of activity) and nature of activity.

So much for the approach of the Chinese thinker to his task. He is practical, unsystematic, looking in the main for ways to better human social life. He is not wedded to a dualistic view of reality [44] but is, on the whole, a naive realist. But a philosophy, as everyone knows, grows out of another ingredient in addition to methodology, *i.e.,* assumption, the back-ground of axiomatic "truth" which the thinker brings, consciously or unconsciously, to every problem. This background seems very evidently to come from precisely that ancient agricultural-village-life complex which was described in Chapter I.

It will be recalled that the chief characteristics of this life were found to be regularity and order, both in social life and in the natural processes of agriculture and the weather. The hypothesis was further ventured that these two sorts of regularity were amalgamated into a cosmology in which the idea of harmony became the ideal. Granet[45] calls the Chinese "des gens dont la pensée profonde était que rien de ce qui est humain ne peut être sans retentissment dans la nature entirère." In theory, at least this formula works also in the reverse direction. Further, "Le sentiment que le monde naturel et la société humaine sont étroitement solidaires a été l'élément de fond de toutes les croyances chinoises."[46] The statement is an extreme one, but in the large, true. Surely no one can read the *Chinese Classics,* not to mention other literature, without being impressed with the emphasis which is laid on the dogma that there *is* a right and proper way to do everything, and that no act is of so little importance that the manner of its doing is a matter of indiffer-

[43] Is not modern physical science moving in much the same direction?

[44] Many, perhaps most, of the writers on Chinese philosophy have called the *yang-yin* idea a dualism. But if it is so, it is a very different sort of dualism from that of the West, since the *yang* and the *yin* are constantly passing over into each other, and both derive from what Wang Ch'ung calls "one primal fluid" 一元氣

[45] *Religion,* p. 31.

[46] Granet, *Religion,* p. 17.

ence. This would obviously be true in a universe so constituted that every portion of it were in the most intimate and immediate relations of cause and effect with every other portion of it.

To be sure, the actions of a king or a feudal lord or a sorcerer are of more importance than the same actions on the part of a husbandman, because the former are placed nearer the center of things. The principle is the same as that by which the deflection of the barrel of a rifle, for a fraction of an inch, is much more important near the breach than at the muzzle. The king is at the center (geographically as well as governmentally) of the world, and it is through him that the social world receives its most beneficial integration with the rest of the cosmos. Therefore, if anything goes wrong at the center of things, if the king is not virtuous, the world of men and of animals is disturbed, and various disorders occur in the natural world and in the heavens. This idea is central to Chinese thought, and is perhaps older than any of our literature. It appears in the *Great Plan*,[47] which is supposed to go back to high antiquity, and to have been written down at the beginning of the Chow dynasty (1024? B. C.).

> Fifth, of the royal perfection.—The sovereign having established his highest point of excellence, he concentrates in himself the five happinesses, and then diffuses them so as to give them to his people:— then on their part the multitudes of the people, resting on your perfection, will give you the preservation of it. That the multitudes of the people have no lawless confederacies, and that men *in office* have no selfish combinations, will be an effect of the sovereign's establishing his highest point of excellence.

As will be shown in Chapter III, one inevitable result of this idea was the very rigorous regulation exercised (always in theory and often in practise) over even the most seemingly unimportant acts, performed by persons of significance.

A taste of the intricate symbolism, by which the conceived linkage of the various elements of the universe was represented, is given by the following:

> Le Ciel exerce son action bienfaisant à l'aide des douze mois et des cinq Éléments; la musique excite la joie, l'allégrésse et produit la concorde au moyen des douze tubes sonores et des cinq notes fondamentales. Chaque tube ex-

[47] Legge, *Chinese Classics*, Vol. III, p. 328.

prime la Nature d'un mois, chaque note a la Vertu d'un saison.[48]

The connection of the idea of harmony with music[49] was not overlooked by the Chinese, and we find many references to music as being peculiarly potent, sometimes for evil as well as for good.[50]

We have said that the ideal is harmony. But what is harmony? Here is one of the crucial questions for ancient Chinese philosophy, and one on which various schools differ, as we shall see. But, in general, harmony is the ordinary, the usual, the "golden mean," the temperate, even the common-place.

> Generous wine (a good thing in moderation) is a poison; one can not drink much of it. The secretion of bees becomes honey; one can not eat much of it. A hero conquers an entire State, but it is better to keep aloof from him. Pretty women delight the eyes, but it is dangerous to keep them. Sophists are interesting, but they can by no means be trusted. Nice tastes spoil the stomach, and pretty looks beguile the heart. Heroes cause disasters, and controversialists do great harm. These four classes are the poison of society. (I, 303.)

Is this not a beautiful example of the philosophy of the typical western rustic? These things look very nicely, but, better let them alone! Yet Wang Ch'ung, who wrote this, was one of the most sophisticated philosophers China has ever produced. When China became an empire, the Chinese village concept was distended to cover hundreds of thousands of square miles.

The concept of harmony is hypostasized as *h'u ch'i* 和氣, "the harmonious fluid," to which Wang refers often. Unusual phenomena which are considered especially good, as, for instance, the birth of sages (I, 316) are referred to the action of this harmonious fluid.[51]

It should be noted that this *h'u ch'i* is not a different *kind* of fluid, but simply a portion of the universally present fluid which has taken on, for the time being, an unusual mode of action. This ephemeral nature of the superusual quality is graphically shown by the fact that if, for instance, the seed from an unusual sort of

[48] Granet, *Religion,* p. 120.

[49] This does not mean that there was "harmony" in the technical musical sense in ancient Chinese music. But even music which consists of single notes must have a certain harmony between those which succeed each other.

[50] *Cf. Lun Hêng,* II, 180; Granet, *Religion* p. 119-121.

[51] *Cf.* also I, 471.

grain (the spontaneous growth of which is a good omen) be sown, the crop will be only ordinary grain, the harmonious fluid which produced the original grain having dissipated (I, 356-7). Wang denies even that there is a species of the fabled unicorn, holding that it is probably born in the deer species under unusual conditions. (I. 357). Specifically: "All ominous 瑞 things originate from a harmonious fluid. "Born in an ordinary species, they have their peculiar character, and therefore become omens." (I, 356.)

It is difficult, however, to distinguish this harmonious fluid[52] from the *chao* (or *yao*) 妖 fluid. The latter adjective has the force of "weird" or "supernatural."

> The *chao* fluid engenders beauty, but the beautiful are often vicious and depraved. The mother of Shu Hu was a beauty. Shu Hsiang's mother knew her, and would not allow her to go to the chamber of her husband. Shu Hsiang remonstrated. "In the depths of the mountains and in vast marshes dragons and snakes really grow," said his mother. "She is beautiful, but I am afraid, lest she give birth to a dragon or a snake, which would bring mishap upon you." (I, 302.)

That is, unusual beings, since they are formed of the same stuff (*i.e.*, the original universal stuff *plus* superusual action-patterns) may and often do change from one into another form of such beings with the greatest ease.

But what is the difference between these two classes of unusual stuff, the harmonious and the weird? Two distinctions may be inferred from Wang's treatment. With respect to origin, the harmonious fluid seems to be generated by an especially harmonious condition, social or cosmic, such as prevails in time of peace or at the equinoxes; the origin of the *chao* fluid is more special and accidental. With respect to result, the harmonious fluid is in general beneficent, while the weird fluid may produce either good or bad effects. These distinctions are not rigorous, however, as we should not expect them to be. In general, the ideal is that of symmetry, a specialization of the harmonious principle which holds that like must be grouped with like. It is therefore the case that the same stuff may be beneficial to one man, who has the constitution to consort with it, and deadly to another.

[52] As here used the word *fluid* is not easy to distinguish in meaning from mere *substance*.

> When the Hsia emperor K'ung Chia was hunting on Mount Shou it began to rain, the sky turned dark, and he entered the house of a citizen, where the mistress was just nursing a baby. Some said the child to which an emperor came must needs rise to high honors, but others were of the opinion that a child unfit for such an honor would become ill-fated. (II, 314.)

The child turned out unlucky.[53]

Again, if two individuals of different constitution, one fated, perhaps, for the nobility, the other for common life, are so unlucky as to marry, the match is very unfortunate, for one of them must die.

It becomes apparent that this matter of harmony and disharmony was not an academic philosophical question, but one of the greatest practical importance. In such a world, if one is to live satisfactorily, he must know, in the first place, what constitutes harmony. How may it be preserved, or, if lost, how may it be regained? These questions of technique and of the fundamental standard of harmony are at the base of the more important philosophical and religious systems developed in China. They must be dealt with in the chapters which remain. Before that, however, there is still something to be sketched of the fundamental background of the whole intellectual drift.

It is evident that in any case "harmony" denotes a relationship between two or more objects. A "harmonious" universe must be a universe in which parts are distinguishable, in order that those parts may stand against each other in that *relation* which alone can give meaning to the term "harmonious." Furthermore, any attempt to produce or to conserve a condition of harmony must have as its end the control of these parts. It is, then, one would suppose, perfectly evident that the investigation of the divisions of Existence (*i.e.*, the universe), of the characteristics of these parts, and of their mutual relationships and tendencies to act, is not only of philosophical and speculative interest, but is (on the premises) a *prerequisite* to practical action, and therefore to be considered as the most practical sort of activity.[54]

[53] This idea differs from the Polynesian idea of the hurt done a commoner by the chief's *mana*, because the conception of kingship is different, as will be shown in the next chapter.

[54] I do not mean to intimate that the physical theories which will be described were all reached as the result of such a process of reasoning as is here given. I do mean, however, to protest against the custom of some writers in the field, to consider Chinese physical theory as utterly impractical and puerile speculation. It has already been shown that Chinese thought was, on the whole, too practical to be so fruitful as it might otherwise well have been.

The Chinese thinkers did not, of course, elaborate the constitution of the universe *de novo,* but rather reworked the old conceptual furniture into useable forms. The first, and perhaps in all Chinese thought the most important divisions which were made, seem to have been the old categories of *yang* and *yin.* The early history of these ideas has been traced. They quickly expanded, in importance, far beyond their vague beginnings.

As well as an historical beginning (which, of course, the Chinese philosopher did not recognize), it was thought in the philosophical era that the *yang* and the *yin* must have had a material origin, and this was almost universally referred to some single original stuff out of which the two were differentiated.

Wang says specifically that "One Heaven (which is *yang*) and one Earth (which is *yin*) conjointly produce all things. When they are created they all receive the same fluid." (I, 471.) But why is there evil in some, why are there such creatures as vipers, etc.?

> Fire is a phenomenon of the sun. All created beings of the world are filled with the solar fluid (or, the fluid of too much *yang*),[55] and after their creation contain some poison [*i.e.,* poison is excessive *yang, cf.* I, 298]. Reptiles and insects possessing this poison in abundance become vipers and adders, bees and scorpions, plants become croton seeds and wild dolichos, fishes become porpoises and *to-shu* fish. Consequently men eating a porpoise liver die, and the bite of a *to-shu* is venomous. . . . .
>
> Among mankind bad characters take the place of these creatures. Their mouths do mischief.[56] The bad men of the world are imbued with poison fluid. The poison of the wicked living in the land of *yang*[57] is still more virulent, hence the curses and the swearing of the people of southern Yüeh have such wonderful results.

Here we see that the *yang* and the *yin* have become, not mere principles of classification, but also principles of origination of all things, and principles, also, of their difference.

[55] *T'ai yang* 太陽 may mean either "the Great Yang" (*i.e.,* the sun) or it may mean "too much (*i.e.,* excessive) *yang.*" Forke translates it always in the former sense, which, while technically correct, does not always present the best sense of the passage to the reader. As a matter of fact, the ideas are *identical* in Wang's thinking, for he says specifically "The sun *is* fire" (I, 301) and fire is the very essence of *yang.*

[56] The mouth and tongue, as well as speech, are *yang.* (I, 246, 301).

[57] The south (I, 298).

It is pertinent to ask, at this point, when these all-pervasive concepts first appear in Chinese literature. Wieger places the earliest possible occurrence of the terms in recorded literature at the time of Confucius.[58] The *Yi King* has been supposed to contain them in other language and in veiled references. Forke says, rightly, that to find them there requires very liberal interpretation. On the other hand, it seems likely that the ideas did exist in some form at a time much earlier than that of Confucius. Let us consult a thoroughly unbiased source for the meaning of the terms. The following definitions are from Mr. O. Z. Tsang's *Complete Chinese-English Dictionary.*

> *Yang.* (*n.*) The male or positive principle in nature. The sun. The south of a hill. The north of a river. Penis. (*adj.*) Male; masculine. Sunny; light; brilliant.
> *Yin.* (*n.*) A shadow; shade. The south side of a river. The female or negative principle in nature. The privates; privities; the genitals. (*adj.*) Shady; dark; cloudy; gloomy. Cold. Mysterious; secret. Female; feminine.

Why do we find in these definitions this irrelevant "south of a hill," "south of a river," etc.? These do not appear to be the deliberate constructions of philosophic terminologists. Granet holds that these refer to the relative positions taken by the young men and the girls in the spring festivals previously referred to, which, he thinks, did much to give content to the *yin* and *yang* idea.[59] The hypothesis seems probable.

There is a difficulty, however, in the apparent non-occurrence of the words, if not of the ideas, in the early literature. The characters occur frequently in the *Shu* and the *Shi,* but are used in senses other than the philosophical. In the *Shu* there seems to be only one certain reference to the *yin* and the *yang* as philosophical concepts.[60]

The particular document in which the passage occurs is said to date from about 1000 B.C. It is possible, also, that the very beginning of *The Great Plan* employs the *yin-yang* idea, in this case substituting *T'ien* for *yang.* No published translation which I have examined gives this meaning to the passage, however.

As a final statement, it may be said that the origin of the *yang* and *yin* ideas is not possible at present to determine positively. They

[58] *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 136.
[59] *Religion,* p. 21.
[60] *Shu,* p. 527.

do not appear, however, to be mere constructions of sophisticated philosophers, and there is reason to believe that they go back to early roots in Chinese folk religion.

It is obviously a simple and inevitable step to identify that regularity and harmony, cosmic and social, of which we have spoken, with the harmony of the *yin* and the *yang*.

> The people being at ease, the *yin* and the *yang* are in harmony, and when they harmonize, all things grow and develop; such being the case, strange omens come forth. (II, 192.)
>
> When the *yin* and the *yang* are at variance, calamitous changes supervene. (II, 16.)

The connection between *yin* and winter, *yang* and summer, was mentioned in Chapter I. This later received a philosophical interpretation. "The *yang* having reached its climax turns into *yin*, and the *yin* having gone to extremes becomes *yang*." (II, 344.) Again there should be noted the tendency of all things to preserve harmony, or at least to tend to and return to it. Animals are classified, in general, as *yang* and *yin*, showing themselves in summer or in winter (II, 357). The bear is, of course, a *yang* animal.[61]

Here we have the beginning of that elaborate classification of objects and phenomena as belonging to the *yin* or to the *yang* which pervades so much of ancient Chinese literature. The brightness and obscurity of the two fluids explains the difference in the length of days in summer and in winter (I, 258). An eclipse is the temporary vanquishment of the *yang* by the *yin* (I, 269), or of the sun by the moon (which is *yin*) (I, 270). The sun is proved to be fire by the fact that a burning-glass held toward the sun will cause flame (II, 350-51, 412); similarly, mirrors left out at night accumulate dew, which is water drawn from the moon (water is the *yin* "element," and the moon is *yin*) (II, 351). Ghosts are made of concentrated *yang*, and therefore are, of course, the *yang* color, red.[62] They are able to hurt people because *yang* is poison (I, 299).[63]

[61] Granet, *Danses*, p. 567.

[62] Wang does not believe that ghosts are dead men, but those who do, in China, sometimes hold that since man is made up of *yang* and of *yin*, and decomposes when he dies, the lighter stuff, *i.e.*, the *yang*, is naturally what will go about hurting people. Ghosts made of *yin* are not unknown, however.

[63] The idea of *yang* as poison would appear not only to be connected with the fact that it is essential activity, and is unharmonious without the mixture of *yin*, but also with the prevalence of disease and fever in summer and in hot regions.

> In Kiang-pei the land is dry; consequently bees and scorpions abound there.[64] . . . Those creatures growing in high and dry places are like the *yang* (the male principle). The *yang* (penis) hangs down, therefore bees and scorpions sting with their tails (I, 302).

The *yin* occupies a less prominent place in this process of classification, as is fitting. "The creatures living in low and wet places resemble the female principle. The female organ is soft and extensible, therefore snakes bite with their mouths" (I, 302). The dragon, an animal associated with clouds and rain, belongs to the *yin*.

A proverb says "Many mouths melt metal."[65]

> The mouth is fire. Fire is the second of the five elements, and speech the second of the five actions. There is an exact correspondence between speech and fire, therefore in speaking of the melting of metal one says that the mouth and tongue melt it.

This brings us to the classification by fives, which is an important and complicated subject. The use of the number five may be traced, perhaps, to counting on the fingers. In any case, any reader of the *Chinese Classics* alone can not fail to note the predominance of the classification into fives.

In the *Great Plan,* of the *Shu King,* the antiquity of which has already been discussed, there are several sets of fives, conspicuously more than of any other number. The five we may accept as old. But which five is oldest, and started the system? Provisionally, in the present lack of evidence, there is good reason to believe that the five directions, north, south, east, west, and center, may well have come first. There is nothing inherently sophisticated in the idea, the Zuni Indians of North America having had as many as seven directions. It is an idea which might easily occur from the east-west passage of the sun, to which a perpendicular is easily erected. The idea of the center, tied to the idea of the village and of the mound (*shê*), seems a natural addition.[66]

Chinese geography represented the world as very much like an apple pie, cut into quarters, with a slice for each cardinal direction. This means that the lines of division ran northeast-southwest and

[64] Denoting *yang,* since water is *yin.*

[65] This may have arisen from the process of blowing the flame of the blast furnace.

[66] Does the fact that there was not an *up* direction, but that there was a *center* associated with the *shê* argue that the *shê* is older than *T'ien?*

northwest-southeast. Heaven was a similar pie, according to one idea, situated a great distance above the earth. The center of heaven was the pole star, while the center of the earth was the imperial *shê*. Whether there were other worlds was debated. (I, 89).[67]

> Le trait fondamental de la pensée chinoise est une classification des êtres par Régions, sous la domination d'un Vent ou d'un Orient.[68]

That the five directions was the first system of the hierarchy of fives to be developed, seems altogether probable, if not provable. But what came next? Probably the five colors and the five *hsing,* but which of these preceded would be difficult to say.

The five colors are not difficult to account for. For north and south we have simply the colors of the *yin* and the *yang,* black and red. Red is the color of the sun and of flame. Black is the color of night, and of darkness and shade in general.

The color of east is green. The sun rises in the east, which governs Spring (I, 520) and the new life. The color most prominent in Spring is, of course, green. The color of the center, always associated with earth, is yellow, which is perfectly understandable if we remember the color of the loess which makes up the soil of much of China.

Only the color of the west, white, is difficult to account for. It may well have come, however, as an attempt to complete the list of colors. It is the only color conspicuously missing from the list previously given.[69]

Concerning the antiquity of the five colors, it is worthy of note that they are mentioned in *The Tribute of Yu,* which Legge suggests may have been written during the Hsia time, and feels rather certain was in existence before 1077 B.C.[70]

Given the five directions and the five colors, the evolution of the so-called Five Elements, the *wu hsing* already referred to, would seem to present no great difficulty. *A priori,* there does not seem to be any great necessity of postulating a foreign origin, as some scholars have done.

[67] It must not be supposed that sophisticated Chinese thought, even in *Wang's* time, held such a simple idea of the heavens. Complicated theories which accounted very ingeniously for the movements of the heavenly bodies had been developed. (*Cf.* I, 260-61).

[68] Granet, *Danses,* p. 390.

[69] Green is a very usual substitute for blue in the making of color series.

[70] *Shu King* in *S. B. E.,* p. 19 (*cf.* p. 67).

The five *hsing* are, in the order of their "production," wood, fire, earth, metal, water.[71] This is the order in which, starting in the east with wood, they would occur, clockwise, as one passed around a map, omitting earth which is the center. It is also the order in which occur, beginning again with wood (corresponding to Spring), the seasons with which these elements are associated, again omitting the earth. They are said to "produce" each other in this order. Wood produces (is capable of supporting) fire; fire produces earth (ashes); earth produces metal; metal produces water (dew deposited on a metal mirror); water produces (makes possible the growth of) wood. Thus the circle is completed.[72]

Another order in which the *hsing* figure prominently in Chinese thought is that in which they "overcome" each other. This order is water, fire, metal, wood, earth, and may be seen to be based on the north-south, west-east opposition. Water extinguishes fire, fire melts metal, metal cuts wood, wood penetrates earth (by the roots of trees, or, perhaps by the wooden plow), earth soaks up or dams the course of water.[73]

As opposed to such attempts at explaining these sequences on a naïve and quasi-naturalistic basis, Granet[74] holds that they are:

> Simplement une transposition dans l'ordre intellectuel de divers modes de la technique divinatoire. . . .

This is possible, and in the existence of good evidence might even be probable, but he admits that

> Nous ne savons pas de quelle façon les techniques divinatoires, astrologiques, et astronomiques ont commandé le developpement de ces théories.

An hypothesis so feebly supported remains an hypothesis. Naturalistic origin appears most probable.

When and where did the five elements originate? Chavannes has held that they were introduced to the Chinese, from a "barbarian" people, about 300 B.C.[75] If true, this would necessitate great revision in the writing of Chinese history. It has, however, been refuted thoroughly both by De Saussure and by Forke.[76] As De

[71] It will be remembered that these are "forces," not inert "elements," and they must not be confused with those "materialistic" concepts which are opposed, in the West, to "spiritual things."

[72] *Cf.* Forke, *Lun Hêng,* Vol. II, p. 469-70.

[73] *Cf. ibid.* Vol. II, p. 470-71.

[74] *Religion,* p. 117-118.

[75] *T'oung Pao,* 1906, p. 96-97.

[76] *T'oung Pao,* 1910, p. 265 f. *Lun Hêng,* Vol. II, p. 240.

Saussure has said, all of the ancient literature of China "est partout (let us be cautious and qualify with "almost") imprégnée de la théorie des cinq éléments."

The five *hsing* are given in the *Great Plan.*

> First, of the five elements.—The first is named water; the second, fire; the third, wood; the fourth, metal; the fifth, earth. *The nature of* water is to soak and descend; of wood, to be crooked and straight; of metal, to obey and to change; while the virtue of earth is seen in seed-sowing and ingathering. That which soaks and descends becomes salt; that which blazes and ascends becomes bitter; that which is crooked and straight becomes sour; that which obeys and changes becomes acrid; and from seed-sowing and ingathering comes sweetness.[77]

Here we have an example of that building of fives, to correspond with the five *hsing,* directions, seasons, etc., which ancient Chinese writers were wont to indulge in. Even in the above quotation, it will be seen that the principle of, at least, easily available analogy, was abandoned. Beyond doubt, there was a reason for each of these lists, and its order, but many of these reasons must have been historical rather than analogical. That we shall ever be able to explain the origin of all of them seems both doubtful and of little import. A table of these fives is given on the next page. It must be remembered that this table is suggestive rather than exhaustive. There are, for instance, within the brief space of the *Great Plan,* tables of fives which it does not include. Further, there is more than one set of animals which is placed in relation to the five *hsing* (*cf.* I, 105).

It is true, as was said in the beginning of this chapter, that these various lists of phenomena were not systematised, in the sense of a rigid revision to remove discrepancies.

There was, however, a distinct but perhaps almost an unconscious process of reducing ancient, and perhaps intruded, elements of thought to the terms of the *yang-yin,* five *hsing* interpretation of the universe. We have seen, for instance, that the *shê,* the village mound, apparently gave three elements to this complex which were not a part of the old cult of the *shê* at all, that is, the idea of *yin* as localized particularly in earth, the idea of the center direction, and the idea of earth as one of the *hsing* and associated with the *yin* and the center. Again, Wang mentions the Four Sacred Mountains

[77] *Shu,* (in *Chinese Classics*) p. 326-27.

Table of the Five "Elements" 五行 and Their Correlates.*

Five "Elements"	wood	fire	earth	metal	water
Five Directions	east	south	center	west	north
Five Colors	green	red	yellow	white	black
Four Seasons	spring	summer		autumn	winter
Five Flavors	sour	bitter	sweet	acrid	salt
Five Odors	goatish	burning	fragrant	rank	rotten
Five Grains	wheat	beans	panicled millet	hemp	millet
Five Sacrifices	inner door	hearth	inner court (atrium)	outer door	well
Five Animals	sheep	fowl	ox	dog	pig
Five Classes of Creatures	scaly	feathered	naked	hairy	shell-covered
Five Organs	spleen	lungs	heart	liver	kidneys
Five Numbers	8	7	5	9	6
Five Musical Notes	*chio*	*chih*	*kung*	*shang*	*yü*

(* This table, based chiefly on the *Li Ki,* is suggestive rather than exhaustive. Many variations from the above lists occur, and many sets of "fives" not mentioned here are to be found in Chinese literature.)

(II, 244). There can be no doubt that the mountain was one of the important objects of early Chinese religion, and it may well have served as the gathering place for feudal lords which it is represented. We find, however, that the sacred mountains become five, each one corresponding to one of the directions.[78] In another place Wang himself speaks of the Five Mountains (I, 251).

It is not to be supposed that the categories which have been mentioned are the only ones which figure in Chinese thought. Various less important categories, such as that of the "Six Honored Ones" (I, 517),[79] are met with, but these seem not to have won any great use, perhaps because they did not fit well with the categories which had already developed into a flourishing complex.

It is altogether possible that the number eight, and the four, are older in Chinese thought than is the five. Certainly eight is an important number throughout the ancient period, but in the literature it is by no means so prominent as the five.

> Les Vents sont huit comme les sons. Les danseurs s'affrontent par bandes de huit (on vient de voir qu'il (sic) se groupaient aussi par trois). Les inventeurs des chants et de la danse sont les Huit fils d'un Souverain . . . qui était le mari de Hi-Ho (le Soleil) et de Tch'ang-hi (la Lune). Le soleil parcourt dans sa journée *seize* stations (parmi les noms qui correspond à la première se retrouve les noms d'un luth et celui d'une danse). Pour presider a la nuit, il y a Deux bandes de Huit divinités.[80]

That the four directions and their media gave origin to the number eight seems *a priori* probable. There is some evidence for this.

> Les huit sons . . . sont, d'après le *Po hou t'ong* chap. 1, *Houai-nan tseu* et le *Po ya*: le Tambour (peau)= N.; la flute de Pan (calebasse à 19 tuyauax)= N-E.; la flûte (bambou)= E.; la caisse de *bois*= S-E.; l'instrument à cordes de soies= S.; le sifflet d'*argile*= S. W.; la cloche (métal)= W.; la pierre sonore= N-W.[81]

Such was the general character of the various ways in which the parts of the world of existence were described in ancient China.

To summarize, we have found the most general conception of

[78] Henry Doré, *Researches into Chinese Superstitions* (tr. by M. Kennelly), Vol. VIII, p. xxiv.

[79] According to Forke, these have been said to be "water, fire, wind, thunder, hills, lakes" or, "sun, moon, stars, rivers, seas, and mountains."

[80] Granet, *Danses,* p. 264.

[81] *Ibid.,* p. 264, n. 1.

early Chinese philosophy to be that of harmony and order, in which social and cosmic regularity are combined in a single complex. But this simple whole had to be analyzed, both under the pressure of curiosity, and of necessity to control the environment of man. This analysis, probably never made consciously, followed old lines of thinking, and gave rise to the idea that all things originated from the interaction of the *yang* and the *yin*. These, combined with the simple ideas of direction, and working perhaps under the influence of the decimal numbering system, developed into the complex series of fives. Other methods of analyzing reality arose in profusion, but were never able to reach the surpremacy of those already mentioned.

Man occupies an interesting place in this universe. He is, as we have seen, a natural and an inseparable part of it, his acts affecting all the universe, and all the universe affecting him, in a manner much more intimate than the Western world is accustomed to suppose. Yet he is also felt to be unique. Wang says "Man alone is not metamorphosed, being the recipient of the real Heavenly fluid" (I, 327). As is not unusual, Wang contradicts himself on this later; however, he is giving expression to a very deep-seated conviction of the value of man, which is typically Chinese. The *Li Ki* says:

> Man is the heart and mind of Heaven and Earth, and the visible embodiment of the five elements. He lives in the enjoyment of all flavors, the discriminating of all notes (of harmony)) and the enrobing of all colors.[82]

Here is suggested the idea, voiced many times, that man is a microcosm, reflecting the universe. He is certainly in close relation to it.

> A great man agrees with Heaven and Earth in virtue (II, 27).
>
> Heaven, in giving birth to the multitudes of the people, to every faculty and relationship annexed its law. The people possess this normal nature. And they (consequently) love its normal virtue.[83]

But man, an integral part of a supposedly harmonious universe, found that all things were not as they should be, and that famine, war, and injustice made life something far different from that ideal peaceful existence which is so beautifully described in the *Classics*. How was this possible? More important, how could humanity find the way back to order, peace, happiness?

To the various answers which were given to these questions, the remainder of this study will be largely devoted.

[82] *Li Ki* (in *Chinese Classics*) p. 382.
[83] *Shi King* (in *Chinese Classics*) p. 541.

PART II

SINISM

CHAPTER III.

ORIGINS OF SINISM

THROUGH the preceding chapters there has run, perhaps to the point of monotony, the reiteration that the Chinese world-view is a peculiar socio-intellectual complex, not properly to be understood by piecemeal equation with any other. This fact is far from having won universal recognition.

That the history of thought is inseparable from the history of terminology is a proposition so patent that it does not require the support of the elaborate case which could be made out for it. Suffice it to say that a gap in terminology is beyond doubt one of the prime reasons for the existence of this conceptual lacuna. To fill this need it is proposed, at least for purposes of this study, to coin the word "Sinism."[84]

The pattern on which the word is formed is, of course, that of "Hinduism." Because of the existence of this word, everyone recognizes that there is a typical Indian (since Hinduism has pervaded India) world-view. Hinduism is the complex pattern of concept and custom which limits, in a very general but very definite way, the thought and action of every Hindu. Sinism is a complex pattern of concept and custom which limits, in a very general but very definite way, the thought and action of every Chinese.

Both of these formulas must be modified in the case of foreign intrusions, but even here the parallel holds. The action of Hinduism,

[84] Two reasons, among others, may be assigned for the lack of a term to designate what I call "Sinism." The first is the textual interest which dominated early workers in the Chinese field. Thus, since Confucius edited the texts of Sinism, and since he and his disciples originated several of them, what more natural than to call it "Confucianism"? The second is the fact that this same pre-occupation, combined with their desire to find primitive monotheism in China, made it impossible for them to see the common socio-intellectual background out of which "Confucianism," "Taoism," and the popular religion evolved.

in assimilating Islam and Christianity more and more to its pattern, is in many ways reminiscent of the very large degree to which Sinism has assimilated Buddhism to itself. Incidentally, this latter case illustrates the need of the proposed term very well. It is said that Chinese Buddhism has appropriated many elements of Confucianism and of Taoism to itself. Yet many of these, as for instance the "Five Relations," antedate both Confucius and Lao Tse by centuries if not by millenia. They are, as a matter of fact, ancient elements of Sinism, within the stream of which Confucius and Lao Tse (the latter much more than the former) figure as initiators of special emphases.

The analogy with Hinduism may fruitfully be carried a little farther. Within the stream of Hinduism we find arising, from time to time, innovators who seem, at first glance, to be utter rebels against the old order, insisting on breaking the dykes of tradition, both in thought and in action, and carving out new paths for themselves. Gautama is a conspicuous Indian example. For a time they and their followers seem actually at war with orthodoxy, and they conceive their position to be absolutely opposed to all that has gone before. Yet a careful examination shows that they have, after all, drawn the materials of their thinking from the source of orthodoxy. Something they have added, something they have rejected; but the points in which they differ from the past are as nothing compared with the points of resemblance. The landscape over which the flood-waters boil is after all, very similar to that from which the main stream has been collected; and gradually the lay of the land drains all back into the parent river. It is a little deepened, a little broader, for the swelling of its current, but as it nears the sea never a ripple betrays the erstwhile deadly enmity of these waters, now inextricably mingled. So, in India, Buddhism becomes, about the tenth century A. D., an organic part of Hinduism.

Such also is the story of Taoism (which I shall call "Laoism") in China. Taking almost all of its materials from old Sinism, it is for a time the bitter enemy of orthodoxy, and later not only becomes itself orthodox but is completely assimilated to the Chinese world-view. Here again the term "Sinism" proves useful, for while it is not correct to say that Taoism was entirely absorbed by Confucianism, it is correct not only to say that Taoism became entirely assimilated to Sinism, but also that, in a larger sense, it

never ceased to be a part of Sinism at all, but was merely a special stress within it.

For the economy of labor it would be well if we could stop content merely to have proposed the addition of a useful word to the vocabulary of sinology. But if we go thus far, logic pushes us farther. If these further steps led into greater confusion, this would be a legitimate cause for considering retreat. It is believed, however, that they lie in the direction of greater clarity.

First, as regards "Confucianism." This has always been a somewhat awkward term, which often had to be used with the apologetic explanation that what it described did not really spring, logically or historically, from Confucius. One is often in some doubt as to whether it is used, in a specific context, to denote the general Chinese world-view, or to denote the particular discipline of the post-Confucian "literati" (*ju* 儒), one of whose most prominent characteristics was their veneration, almost amounting to a cult, of the "Confucian" *Classics*. If one extend the term, as it has been extended, to cover the former, he finds himself in the difficult position of affirming that Lao Tse, a *senior* contemporary of Confucius, took the fundamentals of his thinking from Confucianism, which he so greatly ridiculed.[85]

We shall confine the term "Confucianism," therefore, to denote the discipline of the post-Confucian *ju* based on the Confucian edition of the *Classics*.[86] The older material is covered by the term Sinism, which of course includes Confucianism as an integral part.

It might be urged that this leaves Confucius in the doubtful position of not having been a very good Confucianist. But al-Asheri, in Islam, was not Asherite, either, although his disciples were. Jesus was not a Christian in the Pauline, Roman Catholic, or Evangelical Protestant sense. Indeed, this condition might be urged to be more usual than its reverse.

There remain two avenues not yet considered through which it might be maintained that what is here called Sinism is in reality Confucianism. These are two methods of establishing the position that this world-view was actually the invention of Confucius, rather than a heritage from a previous age. The first method of justifying this contention would be to allege that the classics, espe-

[85] I am assuming here, of course, that Lao Tse took the the fundamentals of his system from Sinism. I shall prove this proposition in a later chapter.

[86] The more popular *Confucian cult* is, of course, already adequately and properly so designated.

cially the *Shu King* and the *Shi King*, were written *in toto*, or at least drastically rewritten, by Confucius himself, rather than merely selectively edited. The second method would be to allege that this rewriting of the classics, in which they were saturated with the philosophy of Sinism, took place after the burning of the books, when they were, according to tradition, reconstituted from memory. It might plausibly be argued that the *ju* who did this work of reconstruction were so thoroughly impregnated with the philosophy of Confucius that they would unconsciously have read this into their manuscripts.

But it must be remembered that the Sinism in the *Classics* can not be accounted for by any introduction of a few characters or even of a great many paragraphs. This philosophical background is as integral to the *Shu* and to most of the *Shi* as is its woof to a fabric. Remove it from the *Shu* and you leave a record as threadbare as is Confucius' own *Ch'un Ch'iu* without commentary (which incidentally does not reveal the sage as a very prolix author).

Confucius' own testimony is on the first point explicit.

> The Master said, "A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang."[87]
>
> The Master said, "I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it *there*."[88]

The history of pseudepigraphy may well cause us to hesitate to accept this testimony unsupported. But Confucius' disciples do not claim originality for him either,[89] nor do his enemies accuse him of forgery in his own time.

Finally, we may cite the fact that in the time of Confucius and within a few centuries following we have abundant evidence of a civilization *embodying* Sinism. One man may, in a brief time, completely rewrite a document. No one man can completely and permanently alter a civilization.

Concerning the second proposition, that Sinism might have been written into the *Classics* after the burning of the books, it is sufficient to point out that at least the *Shu* must, then, have been written *de novo* at that time. But the *Shu King* is one of the great books of the world's literature, and its forgery under such circum-

[87] *Analects* (noted hereafter as *An.*) 6, 1.
[88] *An.* 7, 19.
[89] *An.* 19, 22; 7, 17.

stances would have been indeed a magnificent labor. It is equally difficult to believe that it could have been done or have succeeded. Further, it stands in harmony with the *Yi King,* which according to tradition was never burned.

Such is the case for the institution of the term "Sinism," and the restriction of the use of "Confucianism." What of "Taoism?"

"Taoism" (more strictly "Philosophic Taoism," to distinguish it from the later popular religion) is the term used to designate that philosophy, to be described in a later chapter, the peculiar characteristics of which were originated (or, at least, transmitted) by Lao Tse.

The older sinology showed a marked tendency to consider the Taoism of Lao Tse as an insert into Chinese thought, rather than an evolution out of it. This was done both by neglecting his connections with previous Sinism and by overlooking very considerable similarities of his thinking with that of his supposedly antithetic contemporary, Confucius. Both Granet and Wilhelm, writing recently, recognize that the philosophic concept which Lao-tse represented by *tao* takes most of its elements from Chinese antiquity.[90]

In no work which I have examined, however, is there mention of a fact which would seem to be of prime importance, namely, that not only the idea but the very character *tao* 道 is almost as integral a part of Sinism in general as of the system of Lao Tse.

The character *tao* is used in the *Shu* a total of thirty-three (33) times, in twenty-six (26) of which cases it is used as a philosophical concept. Lao-tse's *tao* is an *extension* of this concept, but by no means an innovation.[91] This fact is even more striking when we consider that the same idea occurs almost on every page of the *Shu,* denoted by other characters, often by *ti* 廸, which is similar in form and, in the context, very often identical in meaning with *tao* as a philosophical concept.[92]

In the Confucian *Analects,* the occurrence of the character and the idea is even more striking. Confucius refers to the *tao* as a philosophical concept, in the *Analects,* no less than fifty-three (53)

[90] Richard Wilhelm, *Lao-tse und der Taoismus.*

[91] The following references to Legge's translation of the *Shu,* in the *Chinese Classics,* show its occurrence *as a philosophical concept*: pp. 55. 61, 64, 65, 159, 183, 186, 210, 211 (twice), 250, 254, 261, 312, 331 (twice), 332, 349 (twice), 477, 527, 567, 572, 575, 576, 577. In other meanings it is used on pp. 99, 102, 112, 119, 345, 388, 558.

[92] Watters, in his *Essays on the Chinese Language,* p. 154, says that *tao* is "nearly or quite synonymous with *ti.*"

times, which is very remarkable when one considers the brevity of the book and the small amount of direct quotation of the Sage. In quotations from others, the character is used, philosophically, twelve (12) times in the *Analects*.[93]

The character *tao* 道 is composed of 走 meaning "to go" and 首, "chief," "leader." It is often used in the classics for "road." In the *Tribute of Yu* (one of the earlier books of the *Shu King*) it is used four times to denote the "channel" of a river. It seems fairly clear that the generally understood meaning of the "way" or the "path" is acceptable as its metaphorical philosophical meaning. It is often used to denote the manner of conduct of an individual; there may be a bad *tao* as well as a good *tao*, even a better and a worse *tao*. So far it is evident that we are dealing with a word which is fairly free from moral or metaphysical connotations, since these must be supplied by adjectives.

But the character *tao*, standing alone, came to have a richness of connotation rivalled by few words in any language. It came to be, in itself, the very epitome, the heart, soul, and symbol of Sinism. In this connotation it was used alike by Confucius and by Lao Tse, *and it acquired this connotation centuries before the birth of the philosopher whose system has been labelled "Taoism."*

In the *Counsels of the Great Yu*, the third document of the *Shu King*, traditionally ascribed to the latter half of the twenty-third century B. C.,[94] occurs the following passage:

Do not violate the *tao* to obtain the praise of the people.[95]

Already *the tao* is a definite, specific concept. Of all possible ways of action, and of cosmic activity, there is *one* way which is above all others. Later, Mencius says, "Prince, do you doubt my words? The *tao* is one, and only one!"[96]

Precisely here is the very nerve center of Sinism. The *Shu*

[93] Following are the passages in which Confucius uses the character *tao* in its philosophical sense in the *Analects*: 3,16; 4,4 (twice); 4,8; 4,15,1; 5,1,2; 5,6; 5,15; 5,20 (twice); 6,15; 6,22; 7,6,1; 8,13,1; 8,13,2 (twice); 8,13,3 (twice); 9,29 (twice); 11,23,3; 12,19 (twice); 13,25 (twice); 14,1 (twice); 14,4 (twice); 14,20,1; 14,30,2; 14,38,2 (twice); 15,6,1 (twice); 15, 6,2 (twice); 15,28 (twice); 15,31 (twice); 15,39; 16,2,1 (twice); 16,2,2; 16,2,3; 16,5; 16,11,2; 17,4,3; 18,5,4; 18,7,5: In other senses he uses it eleven times. *Tao* is used in its philosophical sense by others than Confucius in the following *Analects* passages: 1,2,2; 1,12,1; 3,24; 4,15,2; 5,12; 6,10; 19,2; 19,7; 19,12,2 (twice); 19,19; 19,22,2. They use it in other senses a total of eight times.

[94] My case does not, of course, rest on any claim of such antiquity for the document, but only on its antedating Lao Tse considerably.

[95] *Shu* p. 55.

[96] *Mencius* (hereafter cited as *Men.*), 3,1,1,3.

says, "To revere and honor the *tao* is the way ever to preserve the decree (or favor) of Heaven."[97] To this Lao Tse and Confucius would have joined in a fervent "amen." There *was* a *way,* the right way, and the only way, for the affairs of the cosmos to be carried on. This idea was a development of the concept of order, regularity, and harmony, ideally prevailing in the social as in the natural world, whose origin we have already traced. In one way or another, these Chinese were confident, they had come into the possession of the formula of the universe, a sovereign prescription of which only an adequate dose was needed to right all of the ills of the world in a twinkling. Thus, the theory of "majestic isolation." If they possessed the proper theory for running a state, why should they allow foreigners to come in with different (and *ipso facto* false) ideas and bother the smooth functioning of things?

Confucius is a confirmed Taoist.[98] According to Confucius, a great minister is one who serves his prince according to the *tao.*[98] The superior man (the ideal which Confucius was continually preaching) does not, according to him, worry concerning food, comfort, or personal success; his sole concern is that he may find the *tao,* and hold fast to it.[100]. Confucius' oft-repeated formula for a state in which good government prevails and in which things are as they should be is that it "possesses the *tao";* a state in which things are not as they should be "lacks the *tao.*"[101]

The *tao* pervades the texts of Confucianism. The case of the *Analects* has been presented. The *Great Learning* opens with the words, "The *tao* taught by *The Great Learning* is . . ." The *Doctrine of the Mean* is built about the idea, and uses the character on almost every page. Mencius, as has been said, uses the character frequently and builds his theories, patterned on Confucius, around the concept.

Close investigation will reveal that the concept of the *tao,* as we find it, for instance, in Confucius, closer to the old Sinism, contains two elements (a third element, added by Lao Tse, will be discussed later). The first and more important of these two elements is the conception of an ideal and universal order, harmony, and

[97] *Shu* p. 183.

[98] Not, of course, in the traditional sense, but in that he uses the character and the idea constantly.

[99] *An.* 11,23,3.

[100] *An.* 15,31.

[101] *An.* 14, 4, etc., etc.

perfection, social and cosmic, which had once existed and which, it might fervently be hoped, could be brought to exist again. This, the universal or cosmic *tao*, is an idea common and fundamental to both Confucius and Lao Tse. We have seen the origin and development of this idea in its social background. It is because this idea is thoroughly Chinese in origin, and because it is the very *sine qua non* of the philosophies of Confucius and Lao Tse alike, that they are classed together as preachers of Sinism.

But there is a second meaning inherent in *tao*, namely, the *way* in which the prevalence of the *tao* in the present social world is to be brought about. This latter is not a metaphysical concept, but a matter of technique and discipline. Here it is that Lao Tse and Confucius part company. Confucius probably had this in mind when he said, "Those whose *tao* is different can not lay plans for one another." Of course, in practice each school identified its own discipline with *the* (cosmic) *tao*.

The foregoing presentation, if successful, has established two points: Lao Tse was one of the preachers, philosophers, teachers, of Sinism, to which he gave a very special and peculiar emphasis. He did not originate the philosophical concept of the *tao*, which far antedated him, nor were he and his disciples by any means alone in using it in their own day.

Lao Tse did not originate Taoism. To call his system or his school by that name is confusing and misleading. He did (if our records be at all trustworthy) originate a very unusual and peculiar emphasis within Sinism, which served to attract to him a group of particularly keen-minded disciples, who kept his thought and his system alive long after his death. Lao Tse's peculiar contribution to Sinism should be called by his name, and would be most properly, most clearly, and most serviceably so designated. Henceforth in this study, therefore, what has traditionally been known to sinology by the name of Taoism will be called "Laoism."

A further justification for this term is found in the fact that, while Sinism was in existence before Confucius and would beyond doubt have persisted in some form had he never lived, Laoism is a form of Sinism so special and so different from what had gone before that we can hardly think that it would have come into being without the personality of Lao Tse to originate or to mediate it.[102]

[102] This last phrase leaves room for possible (though I think improbable) influence on Lao Tse from India, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

* * *

Sinism, at its full development, is one of the most interesting systems of social theory and practice to be found anywhere in world history. Many systems have resembled it, in one way or another, but nowhere else, to the writer's knowledge, has the mind of man dared rise to the supreme audacity of envisaging the whole of mankind, nay of the universe, as a single, harmonious, cooperating whole, *every* part of which properly and ideally worked toward a common end of the welfare of all. Even in the sublimest reaches of the Christian dream there remained the "evil," to be overcome indeed, but to exist still, though impotent. But in Sinism there is no conception of evil as substance, but only as disharmony, which becomes good as soon as proper relationships are restored. It is in the Roman Catholicism of the middle ages that we get the nearest approach, in this respect, to Sinism. There, in the actual theory of the Church, if not in its avowed theory, the Pope is finally supreme on earth, the head of all things religious, the arbiter of all things political, the director of the educational system, the Father (in the sense of patriarchal authority) of all men. So it is to an even greater degree with the "Emperor of All Under Heaven."

Since the emperor is beyond all doubt the head and the keystone of Sinism, the system can not, in its full development, antedate the existence of an emperor. And since the emperor as an institution seems beyond question to be a development from the feudal system, a thorough investigation of the origins of Sinism must be pushed back to the origins of Chinese feudalism. At this point we meet something very close to an impasse.

Chinese feudalism is a datum, given in our earliest trustworthy records of Chinese history. The earliest specimens of Chinese writing of which I am aware are feudal records. Indeed, the very impulses leading to the most ancient compositions seem dependent on feudalism. Little use, then, to look to the literature for contemporary evidence of the origins of feudalism. At present the subject is obscure. The best one can do is to present the more plausible theories, leaving selection to be the result of future research.

The theories seem to group themselves into three classes, according to whether they propose feudalism to have sprung from a ruling group or caste, from ancient brotherhoods, or from military necessity.

The theory of an early aristocratic group is one which, on the surface of the evidence. recommends itself most strongly. Maspero tells us:

> La société chinoise, telle qu'elle apparaît à l'époque des Tcheou, était divisée en deux classes distinctes: en bas la plèbe paysanne, en haut la classe patricienne, les nobles *che*. Les principes d'organisation de chacune des deux classes étaient absolument opposés: dans l'une une sorte de grégarisme, une vie en groupes, en communautés où individus et familles doivent se perdre et ne comptent pas; dans l'autre, au contraire, une sorte d'individualisme familial. Les nobles étaient libres de leur personne, dans les limites de leurs devoirs et leur parents; les paysans étaient tenus dans les liens étroits d'une organisation méticuleuse qui ne leur laissait aucune initiative. Les patriciens avaient un nom de clan, des ancêtres, un culte familial, ils pouvaient possèder des fiefs, recevoir des charges officielles; les plébéiens n'avaient rien de tout cela, ils ne pouvaient jamais posséder la terre. Jusque dans les règles morales de la vie, la différence se retrouvait; les patriciens pratiquait les rites, *yi-li*, les plébéiens n'avaient que des coutumes, *sou*: "les rites ne descendent pas jusqu'aux gens du commun."[103]

The noble was a city-dweller, the peasant, of course, never. As in feudal Europe, one class of non-nobles, the artisans, was attached to the urban scheme.

The gulf between noble and peasant is, as Granet points out in the introduction to his *Danses et Legendes,* far-reaching. For example, the number six is associated with the noble scheme, five with the common. All of these considerations produce a strong predisposition to regard the feudal class as being in some way an original caste, such as would be the result of conquest by an outside group.[104] Yet, if we consider the matter for a moment from its *a priori* aspect alone, we must realize that the facts do not preclude any other explanation.

At the height of the development of feudalism in medieval France and Germany we are presented with a picture of human society in which stratification has reached, probably, an extreme as great as any to be found in human history. A serf was considered hardly human. Contemporary accounts tell us that he was a dirty,

[103] Maspero, *op. cit.,* p. 107-8

[104] The Norman conquest of England and its effect on English nobility provides a neat analogy.

evil, misshapen brute, fit for nothing but hard-driven work in the fields. He stank so vilely that lords and ladies (none too dainty themselves in those days) could not bear to be in his vicinity. Yet what was the origin of this situation? We have here no difference of race, nor even any ancient difference of caste. We know that a few centuries earlier the barbarians, from whom lords and serfs alike were recently descended, made it their proudest boast that all were free and all were equal, and that no chief, even, was strong enough to coerce the sovereign will of one of his followers.

The human mind is very quick to adapt itself to an unchallenged *status quo,* and to believe that what is is what has always been. In the United States there is many an aristocracy, based on the wealth of the grandfathers of its members, whose chief claim to glory is that its ranks are forever closed to the merely wealthy. We may not then assume that the mere existence of a Chinese aristocracy in a thoroughly entrenched position necessarily proves for it any great antiquity. Indeed, this argument may be partially reversed. The Chinese, like any good aristocracy, depends on ancestors.[105] People who need ancestors, like people who need anything else badly enough, usually find them. We cannot, therefore, allow ourselves to be led astray by mere genealogies going back to very early times. The effect of ancestor-manufacturing on Chinese historical records has been profound, and cannot yet be accurately gauged. Granet has pointed out that the traditions relating to the ancestral founders of the Yin and the Chow dynasties are so nearly identical that one has certainly been modeled on the other, perhaps the former after the plan of the latter.[106] If this were true, it would mean that the history of the founding of the Yin dynasty was written, almost from the whole cloth, half a millenium after the event. This is an indication of the extreme caution to be used in handling Chinese records dealing with antiquity.

The theory of a ruling caste is strongly advocated by Dr. Tai, who pictures it as a conquering group. He is by no means alone in this position, which as we have seen makes a great appeal. The first difficulty with it is that, like all the other theories, it lacks any considerable body of real historical evidence. Furthermore, close investigation of its claims reveals certain fundamental weaknesses. According to Granet, who is a careful student of the facts,

[105] *Cf.* Maspero, *op. cit.,* p. 119.

[106] *Danses,* p. 398.

"Rien ne permet de découvrir. . . des espèces de castes ethniques antagonistes."[107] Ethnic diversity in China, he points out, is everywhere admitted, but any evidence to show an ethnic duality, or to link the variations of custom to such a dual system is wanting.

Furthermore, Chinese history is full of episodes in which men are raised from the humble position of following the plow or the like, to that of directing the state. When this is merely the elevation to the position of minister the case for caste distinctions may be kept up, but when, as in the case of Shun, a commoner is made emperor, maintenance of the theory is difficult.

> The emperor said, "Oh! you *chief of the* four mountains, I have been on the throne for seventy years. You can carry out my appointments;—I will resign my throne to you." His Eminence said, "I have not the virtue; I should *only* disgrace the imperial seat." The *emperor* said, "Point out some one among the illustrious, or set forth one from among the poor and mean." All *in the court* said to the emperor, "There is an unmarried man among the lower people, called Shun of Yu." The emperor said, "Yes, I have heard of him. What is his character?" His Eminence said, "He is the son of a blind man. His father was obstinately unprincipled; his *step*-mother was insincere; his *half-brother* Seang was arrogant. He has been able, however, by his filial piety to live in harmony with them, and to lead them gradually to self-government, so that they no longer proceed to great wickedness." The emperor said, "I will try him! I will wive him, and then see his behaviour with my two daughters." On this he gave orders, and sent down his two daughters to the north of Kwei, to be wives in the family of Yu. The emperor said to them, "Be reverent!"[108]

In due time Shun succeeded Yao. His humble origin is very far from tarnishing the glory of his memory. Throughout the classical period, the highest praise which can be bestowed on an emperor is to compare his reign to those of "Yao and Shun."

The passage just cited concludes the first document of the *Shu King*. Its historicity is, of course, most doubtful. but its historical importance may not be questioned. For it means that, well before the time of Confucius, the ruling class was willing to admit such an origin for one of the most ancient and most venerated of em-

[107] *Danses,* p. 10.

[108] *Shu* p. 26-7.

perors. It means, also, that if the Chinese feudality did originate as a caste, then that caste, which doted on records and genealogies, must not only have forgotten its origin and even its very existence, but must have lost its very impulse to exclusiveness. All of this seems doubtful.[109]

After the theory that Chinese feudalism finds its origin in a conquering ruling group, differing ethnically from the mass of the people, we may certainly write "not proven" in large letters.

A second approach to the establishment of the early existence of a ruling group is quite as attractive and perhaps more tenable. According to this theory the aristocracy was not ethnically different from the peasantry, but was composed of the descendants of the leaders of nomadic groups which settled China at an early period. Such bands necessarily have some leadership, and such control often becomes localized in certain families. In a settled agricultural condition such families may easily develop into a settled ruling group, without in any way negating or even forgetting the common origin of the whole people. Such a condition is, in fact, what we have in India, in the history of the *Kshatriya* caste. In the late Vedic period, when caste had not yet become rigidly formalised, we have a condition in many ways similar to the Chinese.

This gives, also, a plausible explanation for a phenomenon of the religion which was noted in Chapter I, namely, that it appears that in ancient times the cultus of the peasants was concerned chiefly with the *shê* and the affairs of agriculture, while the aristocratic cult seems from the first to have been attached to Heaven, *T'ien*. The common people, settling down to an agricultural life, would naturally have had their interests quickly assimilated to the new situation. The rulers, on the other hand, would tend to be more conservative, holding to the sky-power which is perhaps the most usual of nomadic deities and which, in China, appears always to have been the sanction of governmental authority.

The hypothesis is so plausible as to be almost irresistible, if—we possessed any real evidence of a previous nomadic state of the Chinese, or even of any very considerable migration which they would have had to make to the present China. But this is, as we have already seen, quite lacking. A comparison of the historical

[109] I am aware that Shun's origin is referred to the rulers of the principality of Yu, somehow reduced in circumstances in Shun's generation. This is only to be expected. But I believe that the text of the *Shu* and the opinion of Mencius (4,2,1,1) give sufficient support to my position.

ethnology of Europe and America will serve to make out a case, of some plausibility, for the origin of man, as such, in Asia, and in precisely what part of Asia one can not say. The Chinese may well have arrived at their present situation, after no very long journey, in small groups entirely lacking any real leadership. This whole question is in a state of suspension, and while it is so no theory of Chinese feudalism which bases its origin on the assumption of an early nomadic stage or a wholesale migration can be accepted without reserve.

Granet's two-volume work, *Danses et Legendes de la Chine Ancienne,* is devoted largely to the development of his "brotherhood" theory of the origin of Chinese feudalism. It is a complicated and ingenious hypothesis, which impresses the reader either as a wild flight of fancy or as a most profound analysis, according to whether or not he agrees with its author. In either case, it is undeniable that Granet's searching investigation of the sources has contributed information of the highest importance to the ultimate solution of the problem. It is impossible to do more than sketch Granet's hypothesis here.

The heart of his scheme is that "Les chefs, semble-t-il, furent d'abord des chefs de confrérie." These brotherhoods were essentially religious organizations, possessing certain religious symbols, totems, dances and ceremonies. This ritual was enacted chiefly, Granet believes, during the winter time, the season when the men were not busy in the fields.

> Celui-la devient un Chef qui, riche de talents religieux et techniques, possède des danses, des chants, des légendes, des emblèmes, des talismans, des joyaux et, créant une clientèle en faisant circuler ce patrimoine, semble le dépenser, mais en accroit le prestige,—et reste maître, quand le moment est bon, de le convertir en valeurs qui, si elles semblent d'ordre matériel, gardent encore toute l'efficacité symboliques des valeurs premières.[110]

The chief was able to appropriate to himself the prestige and properties of the Sacred Place. This was done either by means of the sacrifice of the founding ancestor of the noble line, or of his chief follower, on the spot.[111]

This whole complex reminds one most insistently of the social

[110] Granet, *Danses,* p. 588.

[111] Granet. *Danses,* p. 44, p. 296, p. 402f.

organization of the American Indians of the Northwest Coast area, whose life is so pervaded by the potlatch idea (which Granet mentions often) that they have been said to have a "potlatch psychology." This might be another and striking evidence that the American race derives from Asia and is related to the Chinese.[112] However, the separation in time and space is so great that only a very exhaustive study of all the intervening peoples, and of minute details of each complex, could serve to show psychological relationship. Certainly, the Indians of the Northwest Coast prove that the situation which Granet pictures is not impossible.

A thorough evaluation of Granet's contribution is beyond the scope of this study.

The various theories for the origin of Chinese feudalism are by no means mutually exclusive. Another factor may well, and indeed must, have been operative alongside of any other. That factor is military necessity. The history of the Chinese is that of a peaceful, civilized, agricultural people, inhabiting a particularly fertile and favorable section of Asia, in which they were surrounded on three sides by peoples of somewhat less culture and on the whole warlike disposition. There have been constant incursions of these peoples into the "Middle States," which have resulted in the fact that from time to time a "barbarian" has occupied the throne of the Son of Heaven. It is perfectly obvious that, in such a situation, some kind of provision for military protection was inevitable. Whether or not a conquering people settled down as a ruling caste in China, whether or not a system of religion and ritual resulted in a complex organization of societies whose heads became feudal lords, a military class might be expected to have arisen in China, from the very logic of the situation. And once this class had arisen, there is no question but it would certainly, on the one hand, have developed many of the earmarks of an exclusive class, and on the other hand it would beyond doubt have accumulated for itself certain symbols, rituals, and religious sanctions.[113]

Once more a glimpse at European feudalism is enlightening. The "Chanson de Rolande," the Arthurian cycle, the ritual of knighthood and of the tournament, rich traditions of feudal fam-

[112] The announcement of Professor Sapir, that he has found a relationship to exist between certain Athapascan languages and certain old Sinitic stocks serves to lend additional color to this general proposition.

[113] Even in a country so aggressively democratic as the United States of America, army officers as a group show many of the characteristics of a caste.

ilies, etc., form a background against which one might, with judicious use of the allegorical method, build a formidable hypothesis of an origin like that which Granet gives for the Chinese feudality. Yet, as opposed to this, we know that the fact is that European feudalism came into being largely because not every Frankish farmer could afford a horse and all the accompanying trappings which war with the Saracens made necessary. For this reason, those who were to fight had to be subsidized by the others who stayed at home and looked after their farms. With this subsidy went blue blood and the divine appointment as supermen.

Obscure as is the origin of Chinese feudalism, the origin of the Chinese empire is as much so. As has just been said, although we do not have any trustworthy evidence as to the precise manner of the origin of feudalism, we have no difficulty in conceiving that it must in some manner have come into being. The existence of such an ancient empire as the Chinese, and of such relative stability, is, however, hardly what we would expect. Was it the outgrowth of some vaguely recognized chieftainship over a migrating horde? This would be an attractive theory, if we knew that there had been a migration.

The *Shu King* opens as follows:

> Examining into antiquity, *we find that* the emperor Yaou was called Fang-heun. He was reverent, intelligent, accomplished, and thoughtful,—naturally and without effort. He was sincerely courteous, and capable of *all* complaisance. The display *of these qualities* reached to the four extremities *of the empire,* and extended from earth to heaven. He was able to make the able and virtuous distinguished, and thence proceeded to the love of the nine classes of his kindred, who all became harmonious. He *also* regulated and polished the people *of his domain,* who all became brightly intelligent. *Finally,* he united and harmonized the myriad states *of the empire;* and lo! the black-haired people were transformed. The result was *universal* concord.[114]

That which immediately follows this is pure mythology, and I should not wish to lay myself open to the accusation of taking any of this material literally. Nevertheless, it contains an account of the origin of the empire which is, on the whole, most acceptable.

[114] *Shu* p. 15-17.

Precisely what we should expect is that some ruler of a petty state, possessed of an unusual degree of ability and prestige, should first consolidate his position at home and then proceed to the gradual conquest of the entire group of principalities. To hold them, and make of them a real empire, he would have been obliged, in the words of the text, to "harmonize" them.

Not only is this what we should logically expect to take place, but we are so fortunate as to have records, more or less accurate, which tell of the re-enactment of this very process several times in Chinese history. The rise of each successive dynasty is the story of a similar program, complicated, of course, by the necessity of removing the preceding house.

Whatever may have been the historical relation between the empire and the feudal system, there is no question that in historical times the feudal system was headed up (theoretically, if not always in terms of actual power) by the emperor. The system was very much like that of medieval Europe, each vassal being invested with his fief by his next superior, and the great feudatories receiving their charge from the emperor himself. The emperor had, always in theory and often in practice, the power of removing any vassal at will. He was himself amenable only to the will of Heaven. (The principle, *Vox populi, vox dei,* worked here, however, even more rigorously than elsewhere, as will be developed later).

In the last chapter attention was called to the "philosophical map" of China (see page 30), which contained two imaginary lines running NE-SW and NW-SE, dividing the country into four sections not unlike the quarters of a pie. At the intersection of these lines, the precise imaginary center of the empire, the emperor was located. His influence radiated in all directions, and was mediated by his vassals. This scheme was dramatized by the use of the five colors and the *shê* which have been mentioned before. At the imperial capital was located a mound, symbolizing the earth potency of the whole empire, playing for the larger unit the same rôle as did the *shê* for the village district. Here were made sacrifices for the empire as a whole, and here also was held the service of investing a newly created vassal with a fief. This mound was composed, according to the records, of earth of five colors, the north slope being white, the east green, etc., and the center, symbolizing the imperial power extending over the whole earth, yellow. Now,

when a vassal of royal blood was invested with a fief lying to the east, he was given a piece of earth, green in color, taken from the eastern side of the imperial mound. He, in turn, took this to his capital and embedded it in a similar mound which he built for himself, but which was all of one color (in this case, green).[115] Precisely how old this interesting ceremony may be is difficult to say. Chavannes believes it probably existed before 1000 B. C.

There was a network of mounds, one at each capital, comprising a material symbol of the graded system of feudal power. But it appears at once that this mound is something different from the *shê* which has been described, for that was a symbol of fertility, of the agricultural bounty of the earth, while this mound is rather a symbol of territory possessed by a ruler. The earth to a peasant means fields, but to a prince it means power. The difficulty is cleared up when we find that there were *two* mounds existing side by side in the capitals, one of which typified the earth as agricultural potency, the other as territory. The latter, Chavannes tells us, was called the "Great" or the "Regional" mound, and was located directly opposite the ancestral temple of the ruler of the district. The other, associated with agriculture, was located in the field in which the ruler himself performed the ritual of cultivating the millet destined to be used in the sacrifices in the ancestral temple. The rulers were interested in agriculture, indirectly, almost as much as were the people.[116]

But territory alone does not constitute an aristocracy. An aristocrat must have ancestors, and he usually has an ancestral hall of one kind or another in which he preserves certain memorials of their greatness. The Chinese carried this process very far indeed. The ancestral temple is, to the present day, one of the essentials of a really great Chinese family. Here are kept the tablets representing, first, the great founder of the family, and after him, the tablets of six generations of ancestors reading back from the present. In the ancestral temple, honors of various kinds were preferred, and rewards bestowed, just as punishments were administered "in the presence of the *shê*." It seems also that divination, probably believed in some cases at least to have been communication with the ancestors, was carried on in the ancestral temple.

The possession of territory and ancestors made a feudal lord

[115] Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan*, p. 452-6.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 447-8.

what he was. The territorial mound and the ancestral temple, facing each other, made a capital. These two necessities were the first matters to be attended to in founding a new capital.[117] Here is the philosophical and religious essence of the feudal system.

> En 515 av. J.-C. le sage *Ki Tseu,* du pays de *Wou,* dit: "Si les anciens princes ne sont pas privés de sacrifices en sorte que le peuple ne manque pas de gouvernement, et si les dieux du sol et des moissons reçovient les offrandes prescrites en sorte que l'état ne soit pas ruiné, il est mon souverain (celui qui veille a cela)." Voila pourquoi le prince doit avant toute chose "presider aux dieux du sol et des moissons et s'occuper des sacrifices aux ancêtres." On pourrait relever dans le littérature chinoise d'innombrable passages où on verrait un souverain rapporter, comme le fit l'empereur *Wen* en 167 av. J.-C., la prospérité de son règne "à l'appuie surnaturel (*ling*) que lui a prêté le temple ancestral et au bonheur que lui ont envoyé les dieux du sol et des moissons."[118]

Furthermore, the wiping out of these two potencies was necessary if one were to completely eradicate the menacing influence of one's vanquished predecessor. In the case of the ancestral temple, this seems to have been accomplished by simple demolition. This accorded with the fact that the unfortunate ancestors of the displaced house would no longer continue to receive sacrifices and would soon cease to enjoy even the shadowy kind of immortality accorded to a Chinese noble. In the case of the mound, however, it seems to have been deemed impossible to destroy it completely. This feeling of awe, which forbade the breaking of it into pieces and carting it away, is perhaps another evidence of the antiquity of the cult of the *shê.* The measures taken with it were, first, to cut down the tree which grew on it, and then to build a roof over it so as to break its communication with the heavens. In this way its potency was destroyed.

Two further proofs are at hand to show that these two institutions were the very *sine qua non* of feudalism. As the ancestral temple contained tablets representing the ancestors, so it was customary to erect on the mound a stone column which symbolized its power.[119] When a lord left his capital, he could not take his

[117] *Ibid.,* p. 511.
[118] *Ibid.,* p. 515.
[119] *Ibid.,* p. 476-78.

temple or his mound with him, yet he could not dispense with their support in such undertakings as war, etc. Therefore one of the ancestral tablets from the temple and the stone column from the *shê* were mounted on a special carriage, called the "car of purity" and taken along.[120]

It is surely evident that the various factors which have been discussed since the beginning of this study are not merely rational consequents of the philosophical system described in Chapter II. The two pillars of feudalism are probably reminiscent of a period which knew little of philosophy[121] yet they, as many other elements, have been harmonized to it. Thus, the *shê* and the ancestral temple stand opposite each other and dominate society as the *yin* and the *yang* oppose each other and generate the cosmos. The *shê* stands to the west, and represents *yin,* the temple stands to the east, its proper direction as the representative of the *yang.* Between these two stands the palace of the ruler, who is in himself the center of the universe, the harmonizer of Heaven and Earth, the regulator of all things.[122] Seldom has a philosophy been worked out so prettily in the concrete.

The dynastic histories were likewise harmonized with the system of the five *hsing,* the five colors, and some of their other correlates.[123] Each dynasty had a color and an element corresponding to it. Thus it was red for the Chow (II, 312), white for the Yin (II, 312), yellow and earth for the Han (II, 291). Various omens, such as dragons, of the color proper to the dynasty, were eagerly expected, and believed to presage a prosperous reign. It should be noted that the succession of dynastic *hsing* is made to correspond to the succession in which the *hsing* triumph over one another

> First the white fish was caught, afterwards the red crow, that meant to say that the sway of the Yin (white) was broken and their glory transferred upon the Chow. Prognisticating Wu Wang's[124] fate from the appearance of the fish and the crow, we see that the Chow were destined to obtain control of the empire. (II, 312)
> Wên Wang received a scarlet bird, and Wu Wang, a white fish and a red crow (as omens). The scholars are of the

[120] *Ibid.,* p. 512.
[121] *Cf. Ibid.,* p. 525.
[122] *Ibid.,* 510-11.
[123] Granet, *Religion,* p. 119.
[124] First emperor of the Chow dynasty.

> opinion that with the bird Heaven's decree was transmitted to Wên Wang, which in the case of Wu Wang was done by the fish and the crow. (I, 130).
> Kung-Sun Ch'ên of Lu, under the regime of Hsiao Wên Ti, sent in a memorial to the effect that, the ruling element of the Han being earth, its correlate, a yellow dragon, ought to become visible. Subsequently a yellow dragon put in an appearance and became the style of a reign. (II, 291)[125]

This color motif runs very consistently, and sometimes surprisingly, through the histories. Thus we find that King Wu, after defeating the last of the Yin emperors, decapitates him with a yellow ax (because yellow is the imperial color?), but when he comes to the task of killing the two female favorites of the king, he first strangles them and then decapitates them with a *black* ax, because, we are told, black is the color of the north, the *yin,* and therefore, feminine.[126]

Precisely how much of this by-play is history and how much is commentary it is hard to say, but certainly this accepted theory of things must have played some rôle in a political scene so thoroughly dominated by popular psychology as was the Chinese during a considerable part of its history.

Yet another element of this complex tapestry is so important that it must be dealt with even in this rapid survey. *T'ien,* "Heaven," was referred to in Chapter I. It was suggested there that two origins of this concept are possible. On the one hand, it might be an idea retained from very ancient pastoral nomadic times, strengthened and brought into prominence, as the patron of government, with the rise of the feudal system, and, especially, of the empire. On the other hand, it might have originated as a vague sky-power, recognized by the agricultural Chinese as the source of rain and sunshine and the seat of a certain regulatory function, and have later undergone this same emphasis under the governmental stimulus. In any case, we do find that Heaven is the patron and even the arbiter of government, and that the former kings and their chief officers are vaguely conceived as maintaining a shadowy existence for some time in an upper region associated with the Heaven-power. Discussion of the precise function of Heaven in the government must be postponed a little, while we inquire into

[125] The style *huang-lung,* "Yellow Dragon," under the emperor Hsüan Ti, 49-48 B. C.

[126] Granet, *Danses,* p. 112.

the origin of another figure which occupies a similar, if not the identical, sphere.

This similar figure is that of *Shang Ti* 上帝. The latter character standing alone is regularly used to designate the earthly emperor, although it alone may also be used to stand for *Shang Ti* if the context is clear. The former character, *shang,* is very common, meaning "above, up, superior," etc. *Shang Ti*[127] then means "Superior Ruler," or "Emperor who is above." As a matter of fact he was believed, from an early period, to have his seat in the north polar star, and his ministers to have theirs in the stars of the Great Dipper.

T'ien and *Shang Ti* present, to the Westerner, a pretty puzzle in mixed identities. They have distinct attributes and associations, as will be shown, but they are now and then used synonymously by Chinese writers, apparently to avoid repetition. They are so used in the *Shi King*:[128]

> When *Shang Ti* decreed
> They became subject to Chow.
> They became subject to Chow;
> The decree of *T'ien* is not constant.

It is almost as puzzling at times as is the Christian Trinity, yet the Chinese of the ancient period seldom if ever felt the need of rationalizing the confusion. They had not the Jewish taunt of polytheism which spurred the Church Fathers. Lu Shih wrote:

> *Ti* is *T'ien; T'ien* is *Ti* . . . He is called Heaven, when we look from the point of his overshadowing the entire world; he is called sovereign, when we look from the point of his rulership.[129]

Because of certain differences in characteristics between *T'ien* and *Shang Ti,* it has long been a widely accepted theory that one of them, and probably *Shang Ti,* originated as a deity of some people other than the ancient Chinese proper, and was taken over by them and eventually became fused with *T'ien.* Well authenticated cases of such fusion of deities are legion, so that there is no *a priori* diffi-

[127] I have referred to *T'ien* as "it" and now to *Shang Ti* as "he" because the former is, in general, conceived impersonally, the latter personally.

[128] *Shi King* (in *C.C.*) p. 430.

[129] Quoted by Quentin Kuei Yuan Huang, "The Life of Meh Ti" (*The Open Court,* vol. XLII, no. 863) p. 232, note.

culty in this. Dr. T'ai[130] has made an extensive study of the various theories, and believes that *Shang Ti* was taken over from the Miao-li people, a group which we know was incorporated into the composite Chinese race. He says:

> We have no direct evidence to show that the Chinese got these two terms (*Shang Ti*) from the Miao people. So strictly speaking the conclusion we come to is at best a hypothesis. . . The characteristics of *Shang-ti* indicate that the *Shang-ti* cult had an independent origin from the *T'ien*-worshippers group. From the few instances of the Chinese relations with the Miao people, I am inclined to believe that the latter's influence was very strong on the development of Chinese ancient culture and that they might have supplied the first Chinese immigrants with the concepts and terminology for the *Shang-ti cult*.[131]

T'ai believes that the Miao origin of the *Shang Ti* cult is strongly evidenced by the tradition that Huang Ti, the first Chinese ruler who brought the Miao tribes to complete submission, was also the first to build a temple to *Shang Ti*.[132] He interprets this as having been perhaps a conciliatory gesture. Dr. T'ai concludes that his hypothesis, while not certain, is "very reasonable and probable." That it is reasonable, may be agreed, but it would be well to substitute "possible" for "probable."

The whole position rests on the contention that *Shang Ti* must have originated among a group other than that which first possessed *T'ien*. This in turn rests on certain differences in the two concepts. What were these differences?

T'ien was originally the sky, vaguely conceived as the regulator, first of the seasons and the weather, then of all socio-cosmic affairs.[133] In one passage Wang Ch'ung distinguishes between "blue *T'ien*" (the sky) and "*T'ien shên*" (the intelligence or activity of Heaven) but this is a phenomenon of late sophistication and even then not characteristic. All things, good and bad alike, are ultimately motivated by Heaven.[134]

Shang Ti is a more specific figure.

The original conception of *T'ien* was very naïve while

[130] *Cf.* Kwen Ih T'ai, *op. cit.*
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 228.
[133] *Cf.* Granet, *Religion*, p. 62.
[134] *Cf.* John Ross, *The Original Religion of China*, p. 131.

> *Shang-ti* was conceived from the very beginning as a lofty lord with all the royal dignity and authority.[135]
> [*Shang Ti*] was an urban deity to be worshipped in a temple with cooked offerings, dancing and music.[136]
> *Shang-ti* was to be worshipped by the "Son of *T'ien*" alone, and his association was limited to the deceased ancestors of the ruling dynasty and the spirits of distinguished worthies.[137]

With a lack of dogmatic finality equalling that of Dr. T'ai, I wish to present an hypothesis of my own. It seems that such a figure as *Shang Ti* probably would have arisen, with the appearance of the empire, in any case, *as a transcendentalization of the imperial office and function.* It is a truism among historians that the success of the monotheistic idea in the Roman world is traceable, very considerably, to the existence of the human emperor. In the light of this, nothing is more natural than that the first Chinese emperor who was able firmly to establish his power should be the first to celebrate the fact by raising a temple to *Shang Ti.*

From another point of view, according to this theory, *Shang Ti* appears as a personalization of the political function of *T'ien.* This process is equally common with that of the fusion of deities; the "Holy Ghost" is such a personalization of a function of *Jahweh.* In neither of these cases does the process infringe the basic unity of the original deity; the new name merely denotes an aspect of the old concept. We have, as it happens, a Chinese case of this of which we can be sure, that of the *shê* referred to above. With the rise of feudalism, the old agricultural *shê* had to take on a new function, that of representing the land as political territory; the result was the creation of two mounds, one for the prince, the other for agricultural purposes. So it is with Heaven. The old vague nature-power did not suffice to give the strong cosmic sanction which the new political system needed. What more natural, then, than that *Shang Ti* should be "conceived from the very beginning as a lofty lord with all the royal dignity and authority"?

Through history, the two aspects of the heaven-power remain in much this status. The "will of *T'ien*" is to be learned by consulting the wishes of the people, but *Shang Ti* is more closely allied to the aristocracy, and to its typical symbol, the ancestral temple. In

[135] T'ai, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

the *Doctrine of the Mean,* (one of the specifically Confucian *Classics*) we read:

> By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to heaven and earth they served *Shang Ti* and by the cermonies of the ancestral temple they sacrificed to their ancestors. He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifice to heaven and earth, and the meaning of the several sacrifices to ancestors, would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his hand.[138]

It must be noted, however, that the attributes of *T'ien* and *Shang Ti,* while different, rarely if ever conflict. Thus, even *Shang Ti* does not practise favoritism, for he is limited by the impersonal justice of *T'ien.* "Heaven has no affections; only to those who are reverent does it show affection."[139]

This completes our brief account of background from which Sinism developed. During the remainder of this entire study we shall treat of it as *fait accompli.*

* * *

It is desirable, for the sake of clarity, to set down certain minimal and definitive characteristics of Sinism as a philosophy. I should list them as follows:

First, the conviction that there exists a potential and pre-established pattern according to which all existent things ought to be arranged and regulated, that all things are good in their proper place, and that all deviation from this pattern is unnatural and the result of perversion. This is the belief in the *tao.*

Second, that the emperor is the center of all things on earth (including human and animal society), that he is the earthly viceroy of more than human power, and that it is only necessary for him to adjust perfectly to the *tao* in order to bring about earthly harmony; conversely all disorders on earth are caused, finally, by failure of the emperor to follow the *tao.* The sage has special knowledge of the *tao* and should be employed to advise the emperor.

Third, that in remote times the "Holy Emperors" of the "Golden Age" knew and followed the *tao* and it is therefore

[138] *Doctrine of the Mean,* 19,6.
[139] *Shu,* p. 207.

only necessary to learn and follow their formula in order to bring about universal felicity.[140]

These principles are basic for Confucius and for Lao Tse as well.

Sinism, it must be remembered, was not a political, moral, religious, social, educational, or cosmic philosophy, but all of them as a unified complex. In this respect it represented the facts more nearly than does our Western tendency to artificial departmentalization.

As is not unusual in a feudal situation, the emperor, when strong, was concerned more closely with the people than with his vassals. This was, of course, a recognition of the fact that the people possessed the power to overturn the throne, but it was more than this, too.

The principle of the division of labor was explicitly recognized,[141] with its corollary, that the prime function of the ruler, and the justification of his special privileges, was his care for the welfare of the people. Theoretically, Heaven supervised the process, and appointed the most able and most virtuous man in the empire, regardless of his former position, to be "Son of Heaven."[142] Heaven also removed him when he ceased to act for the good of the people.[143]

But this action of Heaven came about through the action of men. The crucial test was similar in principle to the "trial by combat" in medieval Europe. If an emperor did not bring about the welfare of the people, or if he seemed to forsake the ancient *tao*, one of his vassals simply announced that the decree of Heaven had been removed from the reigning house and was lodged in him, the rebel. The success or failure of his revolution, which hinged on the adherence of the people, was the test of his claims.

He who soothes us is our sovereign, he who oppresses us is our enemy.[144]

Heaven sees and hears as our people see and hear.[145]

This exalted view of the people, represented by the common

[140] This last principle is specifically set forth in the *Shu King,* p. 210. "To maintain the same *tao* as those who secured good government will surely lead to prosperity."

[141] *Cf. Mencius* 3(1),4,6.

[142] *Cf. Shu,* p. 24, p. 283; *Doctrine of the Mean,* 17,5; *Men.* 5,5,4.

[143] *Shu,* p. 186.

[144] *Shu,* p. 296. *Cf.* also *ibid.,* p. 55-56, and Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 14.

[145] *Shu,* p. 74.

saying "Consult the grass and firewood gatherers,"[146] runs throughout the materials in opposition to another common attitude, that of "dealing with the mass of the people as children."[147] Confucius himself alternates between these two attitudes. In the last analysis it is not, however, the people who are to be followed, but the *tao*. "Do not go against the *tao* to get the praise of the people."[148]

It will be readily seen that the verdict of the *Shi*, "It is not easy to be king,"[149] was richly justified. The king was literally responsible for everything which occurred. Among the most tragic passages in the *Classics* are the laments of unfortunate rulers, who, in the midst of some such calamity as famine, know that they must have transgressed, yet are unable to discover how. King Seuen, despairing at the misery of his people suffering from drought, cries "Would that it fell (only) on me!"[150]

The influence of the emperor on the people acts, to be sure, in what we should call "natural" ways. His is the duty of educating the people.[151] Example is recognized as a powerful channel of his influence.[152] But it is also indubitable that there is an element of what we Westerners should call the distinctly metaphysical in its operation.

> The Master said, "When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed.[153]
> Mencius said, "If the sovereign be benevolent, all will be benevolent. If the sovereign be righteous, all will be righteous.[154]
> You (the Emperor) are the wind; the inferior people are the grass. [*I.e.*, when the wind blows, the grass *must* bend].[155]

[146] *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*), 501.

[147] *Doctrine of the Mean*, 20,12.

[148] *Shu*, p. 55.

[149] *Shi King* (in *C.C.*), p. 432.

[150] *Ibid.*, p. 529.

[151] *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*), p. 82.

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 418.

[153] *An.* 13,6.

[154] *Mcn.* 4(2),5.

[155] *Shu King*, p. 539. (Quoted in *Analects.*) *Cf.* also *ibid.*, p. 211,, and *Shi King* (in *C.C.*), p. 406.

This becomes even more plain when we learn that the actions of the ruler affect the very weather.

> People reasoning on heat and cold assert that, when the sovereign is pleased, it is warm, and when he is angry, it is cold. (I, 278).
> If, in the last month of spring, the governmental proceedings proper to winter were observed, cold air would constantly be prevailing; the plants and trees would decay; and in the states there would be great terrors.[156]

It is evident that even the slightest action of the emperor was not without significance or effect. Consequently, every act, even to the slightest, had to be performed in the one way which accorded with *li* and the *tao*. ". . not making a move contrary to propriety:—this is the way for a ruler to cultivate his person."[157] The very food which the emperor ate was designated according to the season. The house in which he lived was ritually prescribed, Granet tells us, and he moved from room to room to accord with the succession of the months.[158]

Since his actions were so important, the emperor could not, of course, be left with only the guidance of his own whims or even of his own knowledge. Specialists of two sorts directed him. First there were his teachers.

> The three kings and the four dynasties were what they were by their teachers.[159]

The ruler treated his master with special respect, and his status was not that of a subject.[160] In the second place, it was the duty of the ministers of the emperor to see that he acted properly. A truly loyal minister, Confucius declares, will not be afraid to tell his sovereign what is right and what is wrong.[161] Asked how a ruler should be served, he replied, "Do not impose upon him, and, moreover, withstand him to his face."[162]

The minister occupies a very important place in Chinese history. It is more than probable that this is due partly to the fact that the history was written by members of this class. Confucius goes so

[156] *Li Ki*, p. 266.
[157] *Doctrine of the Mean*, 20,14.
[158] Granet, *Danses*, p. 117-19 notes.
[159] *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*), p. 88.
[160] *Loc. cit.*
[161] *An.* 14,8.
[162] *An.* 14,23.

far as to make the ministers entirely responsible for the actions of the emperor. Zan Yu declared to Confucius that he was unable to restrain his chief from waging an unjust war. Confucius rebuked him, saying:

> How can he be used as a guide for a blind man, who does not support him when tottering, nor raise him up when fallen?
> And further, you speak wrongly. When a tiger or rhinoceros escapes his cage; when a tortoise or piece of jade is injured in its repository:—whose is the fault?[163]

It is evident that the minister is supposed to act neither for his own profit nor so as to please the Emperor, but according to the *tao*.

The sovereign ruled through the ministers.[164] Thus the *Shu* tells us:

> Good and bad government depend upon worthy officers.[165]
> "If you [the minister] can be correct in your own person, none will dare but be correct."[166]

The Doctrine of the Mean says:

> The administration of government lies in *getting proper* men. Such men are to be got by means of *the ruler's own* character. That character is to be cultivated by treading in the *tao*.[167]

It will be recalled that we have stressed, throughout, the dynamic emphasis in Chinese thought, the tendency to classify things according to action rather than according to substance. This appears in the present situation. It is through his ministers that a ruler acts, and it is by the standard of his actions that he is allowed to retain, or dispossessed of, his throne (in theory). Therefore, if a bad ruler happen to have good ministers, he may still prosper.

> The Master [Confucius] was speaking about the unprincipled course of Duke Ling of Wei, when Ch'i K'ang said, "Since he is of such a character, how is it that he does not lose his state?
> Confucius said, "The Chung-shu Yü has the superintendence of his guests and of strangers; the litanist, T'o, has the management of his ancestral temple; and Wang-sun Chia has the direction of the army and forces:—with such officers as these, how should he lose his state?"[168]

[163] *An.* 16,6-7.
[164] *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*), p. 448.
[165] *Shu King*, p. 256.
[166] *Ibid.*, p. 580.
[167] *Doctrine of the Mean*, 20,4.
[168] *An.* 14,20.

Le Prince a du Prestige quand il a des bons Conseillers.[169]

That the ministers were not uniformly worthy men, in actual practice, is proved by the frequent laments in the *Shi King* against their oppressions.[170]

The cosmos of Sinism may be compared to a huge machine, which functions with perfect smoothness so long as every part remains in proper place and performs its proper function. For even the most insignificant being to fail to do this impaired the harmonious operation of the whole to some extent. It is but natural, therefore, that the greatest emphasis should have been put upon conformity to custom and the keeping of one's proper place.

> When the people keep their several places, there will be no poverty; when harmony prevails, there will be no scarcity of people; and when there is such a *contented* repose, there will be no rebellious upsettings.[171]
>
> The superior man does what is proper to the station in which he is; he does not desire to go beyond this.[172]
>
> *There is government* [and general felicity] when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son.[173]

Conformity to custom was so important that even to change the fashion of clothes was punishable by death.[174]

The problem of status is, of course, the chief one in feudalism. The feudatories compose a sort of pyramid of ascending rank; the desire of each one is to raise himself in the scale, but ordinarily he can do that only by displacing his suzerain. This ambition is a constant force working for disintegration; on the other hand, feudalism seemed, in China, necessary in order to give governmental unity to the Empire. Sinism as a philosophy worked as a prop to support the feudal pyramid against its tendency to crumble; it also was so admirably compounded that it left the greatest freedom for rebellion against despotism without impairing its own force or integrity.

> *The king* said, "May a minister put his sovereign to death?"
>
> *Mencius* said, "He who outrages the benevolence *proper to his nature,* is called a robber; he who outrages righteousness is called a ruffian. The robber and ruffian we call a mere fellow. I have heard of cutting of the fellow Chow,

[169] Granet, *Danses,* p. 79.
[170] *Shi King* (in *C.C.*), p. 170, etc.
[171] *An.* 16,1,10. [172] *Doctrine of the Mean,* 14,1.
[173] *An.* 12,11,12. [174] *Li Ki,* (in *S.B.E.*), p. 277.

but I have not heard of putting a sovereign to death."[175]

The bad ruler ceases to be emperor, and the ruler so unfortunate as to be killed does not go down in history as good, in any but the rarest cases!

But, while it may be an act of the greatest piety to kill the emperor, it is utterly wrong to impose upon him while leaving him in his office, even if one be strong enough to do so.[176] Such action is to leave one's proper place in the scheme of things. It is because they thus presumed upon their power, and forced the impotent head of the nominally ruling house of Chow to do their bidding, that none of the powerful chiefs of the "Warring Kingdoms" period was able to found a dynasty, Chinese historians are convinced.[177] Had they killed him, and occupied his place instead, the order of things would have been left unimpaired.

> Confucius said, "When the Empire follows the *tao,* ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the Son of Heaven. When the Empire lacks the *tao,* ceremonies, music, and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes. When these things proceed from the princes, as a rule, the cases will be few in which they do not lose their power in ten generations.[178]

Like the emperor, the lesser rulers had to keep careful watch over their actions, even to the smallest, for all were of the greatest import. Even the number of wives the noble might marry was rigidly fixed according to his rank.[179] The noble hunted and fished, Granet declares, not for pleasure but in a ceremonial manner for ceremonial purposes.[180] The story is told of a noble lady who, caught in a fire and unable to go forth without a chaperon, allowed herself to be burned alive rather than transgress the code.[181]

As the emperor was known by the quality of his ministers, so the ruler of any rank was known by the vassals who made up his court.

> Le premier mérite du Chef est de promouvoir les meilleurs vassaux. Son mérite est plus grand, s'il sait attirer à sa cour des fidèles nouveaux et qui vaillent mieux encore que les autres.[182]

[175] *Mencius,* 1(2),8.
[176] *An.* 3,1; 8,20,4.
[177] Granet, *Danses,* 104.
[178] *An.* 16,2.
[179] Granet, *Danses,* p. 97-98.
[180] *Ibid.,* p. 384.
[181] Granet, *Religion,* p. 134.
[182] Granet, *Danses,* p. 83.

CHAPTER IV.

CONFUCIUS AND CONFUCIANISM

THE most famous exponent of Sinism was K'ung Fu Tse, or, as his name is latinized, Confucius (551-479 B. C.).[183] The son of an obscure military officer in the state of Lu, he was orphaned early. The *Analects* tell us that he had no teacher, but studied the ancient books and traditions for himself. This seems probable. He worked his way up in the government of Lu until he became one of the chief ministers of the state. As a protest against the improper actions of the Marquis who employed him he resigned, as the code of his class required, at the height of his career. He went thereafter from one state to another seeking employment, but was unable to find a permanent post. Later, he settled down with a circle of disciples about him to teach and to write. He edited the *Shu King* and the *Shi King,* but his original compositions include only the *Ch'un Ch'iu*[184] and, probably, one of the appendices to the *Yi King.*

Confucius has been greatly misunderstood and greatly misinterpreted to the West. Beyond doubt this is due to the fact that the teaching which bears his name formed the strongest bulwark against the entrance of Christianity into the country. In requital, such scholars as Wieger have, perhaps not deliberately, but thoroughly, misrepresented him.

In the Occident he is believed, at least popularly, to have originated Sinism. This has already been shown to be untrue. On the basis of the *Analects* (our most reliable source of information

[183] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 123.

[184] This book is a brief, laconic, and unembellished record of events. Several commentaries have been written on it, and numerous commentaries have been written on these commentaries. The book is supposed to have accorded praise or blame to the persons mentioned, by means of extremely delicate niceties of phrasing. It was probably written with this intent. See Legge's preface to the book in the *Chinese Classics.*

concerning the Sage) it may be seen that he was conspicuously unoriginal as compared with his famous contemporary, Lao Tse, and as compared with the outstanding Chinese thinkers of the centuries which followed him. His teachings are almost entirely a setting forth and elaboration of the philosophy stated in the *Shu* and the *Shi;* many of his statements in the *Analects* are taken verbatim from these sources. Confucius did not pretend to be original.

On the other hand, he has been represented as having been, personally, almost entirely negative, an inhuman, formal, stiff, timid prig. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Confucius who is revealed by an unprejudiced reading of the *Analects* is modest, kindly, earnest, sincere, above all "human." It is, in my opinion, his greatness of character, not exceeded by any figure in world-history, rather than his intellect, which makes him significant for the history of Chinese thought. Confucius lived in a time when all of the old standards were being thrown over, due to the breakdown of the Chow dynasty. The system of thought which we have been sketching had been in existence long before his time, and had been expounded by many men before him. But Confucius, by the force of his personal greatness, was able to catch the imagination of men, and eventually, through his disciples, to reinstate the old philosophy, to some extent, for another two thousand five hundred years.

Part of the injustice done to Confucius derives from the error of considering him the originator of Sinism. To be sure, he insists on formalism, but in this he only attempts to better the ordering of human affairs in the way which had been prescribed from antiquity. In so far as he allows his personal preferences to intrude, he figures as a rationalizer and *humanizer* of the old formulas.

> The Master said, "The linen cap is that which is prescribed by the rules of ceremony, but now a silk one is worn. It is economical, and I follow the common practice.
> The rules of ceremony prescribe the bowing below *the hall,* but now the practice is to bow *only* after ascending it. That is arrogant. I continue to bow below the hall, though I oppose the common practice."[185]
> In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there should be deep sorrow than a minute attention to observances.[186]
> The Master said, " 'It is *li,*'[187] they say 'It is *li,*' they say.

[185] *Analects,* 9,3.
[186] *Ibid.,* 3,4,3.
[187] *I. e.,* "It is according to the rules of propriety."

> Are gems and silk all that is meant by *li?* 'It is music,'[188] they say. 'It is music,' they say. Are bells and drums all that is meant by music?"[189]
> The Master said, "High station filled without indulgent generosity; ceremonies performed without reverence; mourning conducted without sorrow;—wherewith should I contemplate such ways?[190]
> The Master said, "Though a man have abilities as admirable as those of the Duke of Chow, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are not really worth being looked at.[191]

Confucius' way of following the *tao,* which was the way prescribed in the *Shu* and the *Shi,* was to study carefully the methods of the successful emperors and dynasties of the past, and then to apply them.

> The Master said, "Follow the seasons of Hsia.
> "Ride in the state carriage of Yin.
> "Wear the ceremonial cap of Chow.
> "Let the music be the Shao (the music of Shun) with its pantomimes."[192]
> The Master said, "Without knowing the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man.
> "Without knowing *li* (the rules of propriety), it is impossible for the character to be established."[193]

Confucius puts great emphasis, therefore, on learning and study.[194] He does not, however, allow himself to become entangled in the philosopher's error of mistaking words for things,[195] nor does he, in setting up the past as criterion, leave no room for growth.[196]

The picture of Confucius the man can be painted most accurately by a few quotations from the *Analects.* A disciple said of him:

> There were four things from which the Master was entirely free. He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary predeterminations, no obstinacy, no egoism.[197]

He himself said:

> To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friend-

[188] Chinese music of this period had deep moral and ceremonial significance.
[189] *Ibid.,* 17,11.
[190] *Ibid.,* 3,26.
[191] *Ibid.,* 6,11.
[192] *Ibid.,* 15,10.
[193] *Ibid.,* 20,3.
[194] *Ibid.,* 2,16; 8,12; 11,24.
[195] *Ibid.,* 15,40.
[196] *Ibid.,* 3,14; *Cf.* also *Li Ki* (in *C.C.*), p. 390.
[197] *An.* 9,4.

> ly with him;—Tso Ch'iû-ming was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it.[198]
>
> The Master angled, but he did not use a net. He shot, but not at birds perching.[199]
>
> The Master said, "In letters, I am perhaps equal to other men, but *the character of* the superior man, in carrying out in his conduct what he professes, is what I have not yet attained to.[200]
>
> The Master said, "A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present?"[201]
>
> When any of his [Confucius'] friends died, if he had no relations who could be depended upon for the necessary offices, he would say, "I will bury him."[202]

Actual incidents related of the Sage show him as unusually kindly and considerate.[202a] It must be remembered, also, that the things which are said of him are not of the sort of myth with which the disciples of every great man seek to glorify him. Legends about Confucius abound, but we are not dealing here with those. Most of the material in the *Analects* rings true. If the reader doubt, let him take two or three hours to read through the book himself.

There is little of the dilettante or the pedant about Confucius. He is tremendously in earnest.

> Though a man may be able to recite the three hundred odes, yet if, entrusted with a governmental charge, he knows not how to act, or if, when sent to any quarter on a mission, he can not give his replies unassisted, notwithstanding the extent *of his learning,* of what practical use is it?[203]

Such a question would have been sacrilege to a Confucianist of a later day, when the *Classics* had become sacrosanct and their knowledge a badge of caste.

Confucius has been interpreted by various schools of thought, in East and West, to accord with their systems. Especially has there been an effort, under rationalistic influence, to make him a mere ethical teacher, without any system of metaphysics. Enough has been said, I trust, to discredit this position. To be sure, Confucius believed in the force of teaching and example, but he also

198 *Ibid.*, 5,24.
199 *Ibid.*, 7,26.
200 *Ibid.*, 7,32.
201 *Ibid.*, 9,22.
202 *Ibid.*, 10,15.
202a *Ibid.*, 5,1; 15,41.
203 *Ibid.*, 13,5.

believed that the same ends might be achieved without them if the transcendent harmony of the universe were brought about by the emperor, treading in the *tao*. He has been thought likewise to have been a sceptic on the subject of the existence of "spirits," the *kwei* 鬼 and the *shên* 神. Perhaps he was, but our materials do not warrant the assumption.

> Fan Ch'i asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting the *kwei* and *shên,* to keep aloof from them."[204]

The rule of Confucius in regard to these beings, as in regard to all others, is to treat with them no more and no less than *li* prescribes, and in the manner which it prescribes.

> The Master said, "For a man to sacrifice to a *kwei* which does not belong to him [is not of his family] is flattery."[205]

For this philosophy, as for any anthropocentric cosmology, the great problem is, of course, that of evil. If all which exists is properly part of the great harmony, and if at one time that harmony was in existence, how could it ever have ceased? This problem, Confucius never deals with. His practical emphasis did not admit of it. We must, however, consider his doctrine of human nature, since that has been called into question by Dubs.[206] Dubs makes the flat statement that Confucius did not teach that human nature was originally either good or evil.[207] He is mistaken, as the following quotations from the *Analects* will show.

> The Master said, "Man is born for uprightness. If a man lose his uprightness, and yet live, his escape *from death* is the effect of mere good fortune.[208]
> The Master said, "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practise, they come to be wide apart."[209]

Nothing could be more explicit than these two statements. And it will be seen that this is the only position which is really consistent with pure Sinism. For *properly* and *naturally* all things were good, and it was only by perversion that they became evil. And likewise, all things properly worked out for the good, and evil was surely punished and virtue surely rewarded. It was a noble faith—too

[204] *Ibid.,* 5,20.
[205] *Ibid.,* 2,24,1.
[206] H. H. Dubs, *Hsüntze, The Moulder of Ancient Confucianism.*
[207] *Ibid.,* p. 78-79.
[208] *An.* 6,17.
[209] *An.* 17,2.

noble to maintain itself intact in the evil times upon which China had come.

Yet we have not answered the question as to the origin of evil in this once perfect universe. Nor does Confucius answer it, in the *Analects* at least. One passage indicates that he would trace it to a gradual deviation from the original path of rectitude.

> The Master said, "Extravagance leads to insubordination, and parsimony to meanness. It is better to be mean[210] than to be insubordinate.[211]

It must be remembered, of course, that our record of Confucius' teachings is partial at best. But it is not probable that Confucius ever did meet this problem directly, for his interest was in practical statesmanship and social engineering, and he refused, like Gautama, to spin logical spider-webs. Such an emphasis was thoroughly compatible with his belief in the efficacy of certain techniques which we should call magical. To the man who uses magical technique, it is as much a valid and common-sense means of achievement as our magical category, "Science!", is to us.

The error of thinking Confucius a sceptic regarding the existence of superusual beings, which had its origin in this practical emphasis, has been touched on. His pragmatic attitude has been still further misinterpreted by Wieger to be "opportunism," action with a view to getting results without much reference to principle or means.[212] It is not without whimsicality that Wieger, himself a Jesuit scholar, should libel Confucius with the very accusation of "Jesuitical" tactics which has followed his own order. What are the facts?

> The Master said, "The superior man, in the world, does not set his mind either for anything or against anything; what is right he will follow."[213]

"What is *right* he will follow." The character used here is *i,* but *tao* or *li* might be substituted equally well. If there exists in the world a more exacting code of principles than this one, I do not know it. Confucius means simply that a man is not to follow his own whims and personal opinions as over against the cosmically grounded principles of right action—a fundamental principle of Fr. Wieger's own Church. The learned Jesuit makes the mistake of believing

[210] *I.e.,* at all costs, *order* must be preserved.
[211] *An.* 7,35.
[212] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 133.
[213] *An.* 4,10.

that lack of Christianity means, *ipso facto,* lack of any body of settled principle.

Unsparing of himself, Confucius demanded that others, and especially those of his own class, the scholars in government service, should be equally selfless in working for the prevalence of the *tao.* Again and again he tells us that the man of complete virtue will give up his life if need be rather than violate it. No matter how ancient an agreement may be, it must be kept. One who calls himself a scholar, and yet who devotes himself to truth so little that he can be ashamed of bad food and bad clothes, is not worth talking to. He is especially scornful of the mercenary scholar.

> The Master said, "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow;—I have still joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honors, acquired by unrighteousness, are to me as a floating cloud."[214]

Is there any asceticism in Confucius' teaching? He does, to be sure, declare that it is not the part of the superior man to take undue enjoyment in fine food and ornamentation of his dwelling. He stigmatizes some music as "licientious," and he left the employ of the Marquis of Lu, at the height of his own career, because the Marquis was devoting his time to dancing girls. Yet the objection in the latter case was chiefly, at least, that the Marquis was neglecting his governmental duties; in other cases, too, devotion to pleasure was disapproved because it made devotion to duties impossible. In each situation, *li* was the guide, and *li* was the code of good manners made sacred. Obviously, few ascetic practices could have been tolerated within it; even a slight deviation in dress was sacrilege. Mutilation of the body (although practised by the government as punishment) was a serious breach of filial piety if performed by the individual, since it destroyed part of what was given by one's parents. A good Chinese had too many duties, within the order of Sinism, to have time for much asceticism.

Confucius was by no means a foe to happiness. The bringing of universal happiness was, in fact, his great ideal, and he approves the enjoyment of life, in conformity with *li,* wherever he finds it. On one occasion he asked several of his disciples to name their wishes. Three named more or less grandiose ambitions, to govern states well, and the like. Confucius turned to the fourth, who said:

[214] *An.* 6,15.

> In *this,* the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the *I,* enjoy the breeze among the rain-altars, and return home singing." The Master heaved a sigh and said, "I give my approval to Teen."[215]

Incidentally, this approval of participation in an ancient and homely rite by one of his disciples does not show Confucius as the rationalistic sceptic he has sometimes been made out.

Confucius' devotion to duty was intensified by a sense of mission such as most great men have had. He feels very definitely that he has been appointed by Heaven to further the *tao,* and that so long as this mission is yet to be fulfilled he can not be harmed.[216] This was in part responsible for the very great personal courage which he displayed on several occasions. The corollary of this position, at which Confucius merely hints in moments of despair, is that Heaven is also responsible for his lack of success. Here again the problem of evil raises its head. Like his successors, Confucius seems to have been given to a degree of fatalism.[217] Neither of these problems was recognized squarely until the time of Wang Ch'ung (the first century A. D.).

Sinism had as one of its integral parts, it will be remembered, the arrangement of society, as well as of authority, in a system of graded ramifications from the center, which might be compared to an arterial system. All were bound to the center, *i.e.,* the emperor, but by a graded series, which extended from individuals to the head of the family, thence to the petty feudal lord, to the greater lord, and so on up to the imperial throne. It has been said that the theory of the empire was a magnification of the theory of the village. The village was a family, or a group of families; the empire was also conceived on the pattern of a great family. The centrality of the family concept in Confucius teaching was therefore thoroughly consistent. One of the very corner-stones of Sinism was the "five relations," that of father and son, of elder brother and younger brother, of husband and wife, of elders and juniors, and of ruler and minister. It will be seen that three of these are specifically within the family. These five relationships are mentioned in the *Classics,* from the earliest to the latest, as being of paramount im-

[215] *An.* 11,25,7.
[216] *An.* 7,22; 9,5; 14,37-38.
[217] *An.* 12,5,3.

portance. The family was, in fact, the most important Chinese institution, as it remains today. Religion and philosophy, which always rationalize the status quo, were inevitably built around this center. When Mo Tse treated family loyalties as of relatively little importance he was rightly accused of heresy from the ancient point of view. Confucius, in this as in most other matters, followed the ancient way.

> The Duke of Shê informed Confucius, saying, "Among us here there are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact."
> Confucius said, "Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this."[218]

This does not mean, however, what has sometimes been attributed to Confucius, an attitude of indifference toward all but one's kin. He was a persistent preacher of altruism, which he also practised, and he advocated practical charity. It was only to the evil-doer who was not of one's kin that he denied the claim of help. Although, when asked to define benevolence, he replied, "It is to love men," he also said, "Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."

One of the chief reasons for which Confucius is important for sinology is the fact that he edited the *Shi* and the *Shu*. A vital problem, which will probably never be solved, concerns the extent to which he altered the materials which came to his hand. The matter has been referred to before, and little can be added here. The general opinion is that, while he eliminated much of what he found, he altered the remainder but little if at all. Confucius, in so far as we can see him, is a traditionalist, not an innovator. The true traditionalist may easily select those materials which harmonize with each other and with his own views, but his reverence for the past will probably interdict any great amount of tampering with those records which he believes correct and therefore sacred. We know that in at least one instance, that of the songs of Ch'ing in the *Shi*, Confucius included materials of which he violently disapproved.[219]

[218] *An.* 13,18.
[219] *Analects,* 15,10,6. *Cf.* Legge's note, in *Chinese Classics,* v.I, p. 162.

It is Confucius who gives us the first, the most complete, and the most faithful picture of the orthodox Sinism which had flourished up to his time. After him, and starting in his own day, we enter the period of criticism and of philosophical embellishment of the old system. As we have seen, there is little of this in Confucius, and the lack makes him invaluable. Had he been more original, he would be less important for this study.

In treating next of Mencius, we take up the most important successor of the Master, often called the Second Sage, and credited with having given its wide vogue to the teaching of Confucius. We skip a hundred years, to which we must return later to deal with those trends of thought which differed more from the way of the ancients.

Mencius is the latinization of Meng Tse. The philosopher, who lived from 372 to 289 B. C.,[220] was born in Confucius' native state of Lu. He received his training, it is recorded, from the sole grandson of Confucius, who is generally agreed to be the author of the *Chung Yung* or *Doctrine of the Mean,* which is the third of the *Four Books.* The book of Mencius, entitled simply by his name, is the fourth and last of these documents, which might together be called the "New Testament" of the Confucian school. Mencius' book is said to have been written by himself, but there is reason to believe that it was probably composed after his death by a disciple. This was the more usual procedure.

Mencius, like Confucius, travelled widely, but the object of his travels was very different. Confucius sought, above all, an opportunity to put his principles into practice; Mencius, although he occasionally held office, relinquished it easily, and sometimes for reasons which seem to be mere petulance. On one occasion he complains that a king who had employed him did not really want him, else he would have kept a representative perpetually beside the philosopher to compliment him and assure him of the great esteem in which the king held his services, and of how sorry the king would be to lose him![221]

The fact is that Mencius was a philosopher and a teacher, while Confucius before him was primarily a man desperately concerned to save the empire. Mencius really cares far more that his own brilliance shall be recognized, and that his dignity shall be un-

[220] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 226.
[221] *Mencius* 2(2), 11.

impaired, than for the prevalence of that hazy thing called the *tao*, which is so far away and which Heaven itself does not yet wish to prevail. The rôle of harsh and unbending critic, which he filled to perfection, suited him far better than did that of practical reformer. In originality, and in intellectual penetration, he far outshone Confucius; in personal greatness he is not to be compared with him. For some incomprehensible reason, the opposite view seems to have gained currency in the West.

Mencius is conspicuously lacking in that uniform courtesy and kindness which was perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the great Master.[222] He considered himself so eminent that it was the place of kings to approach him for advice, rather than for him to go to them (one can hear, and enjoy, the stinging rebuke which Confucius must have uttered from the tomb for this arrogant breach of *li*.)[223] Time after time he dodges the issue when questioned, saving his reputation for omniscience by a bit of cleverness.[224] On one occasion, when asked by the ruler of Ts'e if the state of Yen might properly be attacked, he answered "It may." But when, after the attack had been made, he was accused of having countenanced an unjust aggression, he denied the charge. He had only been asked, he declared, if the State might be attacked, nothing had been said of *who* might properly conquer it. Oh, by no means, he had not advised the attack![225] Confucius despised such slyness.

On the other hand, the good qualities of Mencius were not a few. His loyalty to the memory of Confucius is implicit. He does not hesitate to decline large sums of money offered him, though he accepts gifts when in need. And his very arrogance compels our admiration when he carries it, as he often did, to the point of telling a king to his face that he ought to be put to death if he does not govern his kingdom well.[226] And it is Mencius who has given us our most inspiring statement of the ancient Chinese ideal of character.

> To dwell in the wide house of the world, to fill his correct place in the world, and to walk in the great *tao* of the world; when he obtains his desire *for office*, to practise his principles for the good of the people; and when that desire is disappointed, to practise them alone; to be above

[222] *Men.* 2(2), 11, etc.
[223] *Men.* 2(2),2,7.
[224] *Men.* 6(2),1; etc.
[225] *Men.* 2(2),8.
[226] *Men.* 1(2),8,2; 5(2),9,1.

> the power of riches and honors to make dissipated, of poverty and mean condition to make swerve from principle, and of power and force to make bend:—such is the man who may be called truly great and courageous.[227]

After Confucius, the integrity of the old Sinism, as a metaphysical system, began gradually to disintegrate, but the enfeeblement in Mencius is very slight. Mencius still insists that to follow the *tao* absolutely is the way to bring about felicity, and declares that a king who fails to do so is responsible for the death of his subjects as surely as if he put them to the sword.[228] The power of virtue is so great that the untrained peasants of a state which practises righteousness, though they be armed but with sticks, will utterly rout the mail-clad soldiers of a state which has forsaken the *tao*. Likewise, there will be no famine if only agriculture, fishing, etc., be carried on in the proper and prescribed manner. On the other hand, if the people are not given the benefit of the Confucian teaching, but are led astray by the perverse doctrines of Yang Chu and Mo Tse, they will forsake the *tao* so far that the harmony of the world-order will be shattered, and beasts will be led on to eat men—more, men will take to eating each other.[229] All of this is in strict conformity with Confucius.

But Mencius says other things which Confucius would never have said. These aberrations are due, not so much to a genuine difference in philosophy, as to an inability clearly to hold in mind, at the same time, all of the various elements of the Sinistic system. Mencius was incisive and analytical, but neither he nor any of the other later philosophers of the period had the mellowness, the breadth of wisdom, and the firm intellectual grasp of the old philosophy which Confucius had. This may have been due in part to the fact that Confucius taught himself, and did not receive a "predigested" system from a master.

When asked by a king what was necessary in order to attain the imperial sway, Mencius replied, "The love and protection of the people; with this there is no other power which can prevent the ruler from attaining it."[230] Again, he approves the appointment, as minister, of a scholar who is neither vigorous, wise, nor well informed, but whose sole qualification is that he loves what is good.

[227] *Men.* 3(2),2,3.
[228] *Men.* 1(1),2,2; 1(1),4,3.
[229] *Men.* 3(2),9,9.
[230] *Men.* 1(1),7,3.

Questioned on the point, Mencius declares that "The love of what is good is more than a sufficient qualification for the government of the empire."[231] Now, this is scandal from the ancient point of view. To be sure, motivation must be correct, but in addition a man had to know *li* (Confucius stresses learning more than piety) and he had actually to follow the *tao*, properly *performing* the necessary rites and duties. Were Mencius here, his ubiquitous cleverness would provide the answer that of course, if a man really loved what was good, this action would follow as a matter of course. But we must over-rule the objection. Unwittingly, he was helping in the gradual corruption of the old philosophy. His stand on tradition represents another divergence, for he tells us that

> "It would be better to be without the *Book of History* [the *Shu*] than to believe all of it."

Confucius was not a book-worshipper, but he would have asked which were better, to have a book with a few errors, or to lack the *tao* entirely?

Concerning the nature of man Mencius is, however, in essential agreement with Confucius, though Dubs has denied this. As is well known, Mencius teaches that men are naturally good, and this is, as has been shown, in conformity with Sinism. He shows great ingenuity in defending this position against attacks. It is, apparently, their understanding of the *tao* which distinguishes men from the beasts.

> "Men possess the *tao;* but if they are well fed, warmly clad, and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time, they become almost like beasts."[232]
> "That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The mass of people cast it away, while superior men preserve it."[233]

Mencius further says that the man who knows his own nature thoroughly knows Heaven. This would seem to be based on the organic unity and harmony which pervade the cosmos. Another reminder of the natural philosophy is the fact that men, like other objects, differ among themselves not in substance but in *action.* Any man may be like Yao or Shun, if his conduct be so.[234]

But still we ask why, starting equal, men become so widely

[231] *Men.* 6(2),13.
[232] *Men.* 3(1),4,8.
[233] *Men.* 4(2),19,1.
[234] *Men.* 4(2), 28; 4(2),32.

different? The only clear answer which Mencius gives refers us to environment. He uses the figure of a field of barley, sown with the same seed, but giving an unequal yield in different sections; this is due, he says, to inequalities of soil, rain, and dew, and to unequal cultivation of the various portions. He rejects all hereditary differences. Another time, when hard pressed, he answers:

> "The senses of hearing and seeing do not think, and are obscured by objects. When one thing comes into contact with another, as a matter of course it leads it away. To the mind belongs the office of thinking. By thinking, one attains *the truth;* by neglecting to think he fails to do so."[235]

But he has not yet told us why it is that one man thinks, and another fails to, although he pretended to answer that very question. This throws him back on the first portion of his statement, which is much like contemporary deterministic behaviorism. In fact, Mencius is much inclined to fatalism. He declares that Heaven does not yet wish the right to triumph, and proclaims a doctrine familiar to the West, that Heaven sends calamities in order to strengthen men. Although cheerfully ascribing some of his own failures to destiny, he adds that the man who properly understands the decrees of Heaven will not stand beneath a precipitous wall.

Mencius could afford to be a fatalist. The plight of the Empire was not a matter of burning personal distress to him. His most biting criticisms only exalted his fame and his self-esteem, and in any case his needs were well taken care of. He was received with the greatest respect, even kings quailed before him—he was having a very good time. "It is fate"—well, why not?

Mencius' chief claim to intellectual distinction lies, probably, in his social psychology. He declares that all possess the capacity of natural sympathy.

> "If men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will all without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. *They will feel so* not as a ground on which they may gain the favor of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of *having been unmoved by* such a thing."[236]

From this point he builds, in outline, an entire system of ethics, which, being so firmly grounded, is not without force today. His criticism of the ethic of "enlightened self-interest" is penetrating.

[235] *Men.* 6(1),15. [236] *Men.* 2(1),6,3.

It is impossible, on this basis, to build a genuinely cooperative society, he asserts, because at the end one still has no more than a group of self-seeking individuals, whose reactions in crises may not be depended upon to be social.[237]

In next considering Hsün Tse, we come to a philosopher who is, in the history of Chinese thought, a figure of paradoxes. Dubs calls him "the moulder of ancient Confucianism," and he is one of the most important Confucianists in history; as a matter of fact, he is the destroyer of the principles of Confucius, for he utterly and explicitly denied and rejected the heart and soul of Sinism. Lao Tse and his teachings are considered the arch-opponents of Confucius, and Hsün Tse is considered a disciple of the latter. Yet, as compared with Hsün Tse, Confucius and Lao Tse stand solidly together on the basis of Sinism, which Hsün Tse discarded.

It is evident that the technique by which Hsün Tse nullified the teachings of Confucius must have been subtle. It was. And yet it is the simplest and most usual technique imaginable. Hsün Tse simply "modernized" and "interpreted" Confucius. The procedure is that which has been used numberless times, and is still used, to substitute some more favored philosophy for the teachings of Gautama, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Jesus, or another, while at the same time preserving for the substituted system the prestige of the famous teacher. In most cases, the persons who make the change are quite sincere, and innocent of any intent to deceive. This was true, I believe, of Hsün Tse.

The life of Hsün Tse is little known. Dubs dates him as having lived approximately from 320 to 235 B. C. Hsün Tse strikes one as a man more interested in his task than in himself. He lived toward the end of the period of the "Warring Kingdoms." The time was one of constant bloodshed and ruin. The fifty-five states, which had been, were now consolidated to ten, but the struggle went on more fiercely than ever between these. A student of Hsün Tse, Han Fei Tse, was counselor to the T'sin emperor who finally did consolidate China, but this was after the time of Hsün. His day was one of slaughter, licence, and sophistry. From this came his very low estimate of human nature, cardinal in his philosophy. He saw that while the idealism of Confucius might have worked in the ancient "Age of Peace," something sterner was needed for his own "Age of Trouble." He did not attain fame until middle

[237] *Men.* 6(2),4.

age, and it is probable that he had already worked out his own ideas, at least in outline, before he came in direct contact with the Confucian tradition.

What Hsün Tse does is to retain the outward forms of Confucian ethics and politics, while discarding the cosmic sanctions and metaphysical guarantees which were central for Confucius. For Hsün Tse, Heaven is merely the active principle, invisible and impalpable, which pervades all beings in the whole world. It is wrong to say that good and bad fortune come from Heaven. Drouths, floods, etc., are merely the natural activities of the cosmos, which may injure men but do not do so intentionally; it is for man to use his intelligence and industry to provide against these things, and so to make himself independent of Heaven and earth.[238] Ancient tradition should be followed in government *because it is, after all, that which has proved useful in experience,* but it is to be used experimentally, and modified and adapted to suit new conditions. Confucius and his disciples were wrong in considering it an absolute standard, to be applied as found in the *Classics*.[239] The right of revolution is affirmed, but Hsün Tse declares that Heaven has nothing to do with the tenure of kings. The "Decree of Heaven" is "what one meets at the moment." "The supernatural sanction is entirely gone."[240] Hsün Tse agrees with Confucius and Mencius in deploring war, which disrupts society and causes misery, and like them he declares that righteousness is worth more than a standing army. But they believed that this was true because Heaven prospered the man who followed the *tao,* and the whole universe was with him. Hsün Tse's argument is that all the people would love a good ruler so much that it would be impossible to get an army to oppose him.[241] Again, he says:

> If a man's deportment is respectful, his heart loyal and faithful, his methods according to the rules of proper conduct and justice, and his ruling passions love and benevolence, were he to rule over the empire, although he were harassed by the four barbarian tribes, the people would not fail to honor him.[242]

But Confucius would have declared that such a ruler could not possibly have been harassed by anything or anybody, else the very structure of the universe must have been altered.

[238] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 277. [239] *Ibid.,* p. 280.
[240] Dubs, *op. cit.,* p. 260. *Cf.* also p. 54. [241] *Ibid.,* pp. 268-69.
[242] *Ibid.* p. 258.

How could Hsün Tse pass such teachings as true Confucianism? In the first place, he attributed his own contempt of human nature to Confucius. He declared that Confucius realized that the men of his time did not wish to see the real truth. For this reason Confucius gave them the ancient axioms, to be accepted as a matter of faith. Common men believe, and wait foolishly for Heaven to help them. But the sages, Hsün Tse assures us, use their own wits and ability to solve their problems, and worry little or not at all about Heaven. The sages know that the speaking of the ancestors through the tortoise and the milfoil, the bringing of rain by prayers and offerings, etc., are only ways of explaining obscure natural phenomena to the unintelligent people.[243]

This is the old doctrine of the "symbolic scriptures" and the "esoteric tradition." That Hsün Tse should have used it is natural, but that he should have succeeded in imposing the unconscious fraud, not only upon a large portion of subsequent Chinese Confucianism, but on a large portion of modern Western scholarship, is astounding. Yet it is Hsün Tse's Confucius that many of us are given today—a rationalistic sceptic, looking down on, but tolerating for pragmatic reasons, the silly superstitions of people and princes. Dubs says of Hsün Tse, "His logical mind grasped the Confucian philosophy in systematic form, and he set to work to express and defend the Confucian teaching in its wholeness as none before him had done." On this point, either Dr. Dubs has misunderstood Confucius, or I have. Let those who are competent judge.

First of all, it is beyond question that the *Classics* are saturated with the metaphysical relation existing between Heaven, men, and all things. This is that universal harmony which composes the *tao*. But did Confucius, as Hsün Tse declared, have his tongue in his cheek when he pretended to take this seriously? To answer this question it is necessary to live with the *Analects* for a time, and to come to know Confucius well. No mere citation of passages can settle the point; we must, however, be content with that here. No one who has read the *Analects* will doubt that Confucius mentions the sacrifices very often. But did he believe in their efficacy?

> Some one asked the meaning of the great sacrifice. The Master said, "I do not know. He who knew its meaning would find it as easy to govern the empire as to look on this;"—pointing to his palm.[244]

[243] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* pp. 277-79. [244] *An.* 3,11.

It has already been shown that Confucius felt a very definite personal relation with Heaven.

> He [Confucius] said, "After the death of king Wan, was not the cause of truth lodged here *in me?* If Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth[245] perish, then I, a future mortal, should not have got such a relation to that cause. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the people of K'wang do to me?"[246]
> I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven;—that knows me![247]

Hsün tells us that the sages were far above the belief in divination, omens, etc., which the foolish people clung to. Why, then, does Confucius declare that his decay is extreme merely because for a long time he has not seen the Duke of Chow (whom he considered his preceptor) in his dreams? Why is the low point of the *Analects* the passage in which Confucius declares that all is over with him, because no phoenix has been seen, and the river has given forth no map?[248] All of these are traditional omens of political good fortune.

According to Hsün Tse, law (*fa* 法), propriety (*li* 禮), and righteousness (*i* 義), are not natural, but are artificial restraints devised by the sages to make a sort of straight-jacket in which to confine evil-natured humanity. Thus, the *tao* was empirically established, and is from time to time revised and amplified.[249] Is this experimental, piecemeal, non-cosmic ethics the true spirit of Confucius' teaching? Emphatically, no!

> The Master said, "Ts'ze, you think, I suppose, that I am one who learns many things and keeps them in memory?" Ts'ze-kung replied, "Yes,—but perhaps it is not so?" "No," was the answer; "I *seek* an all-pervading unity."[250]
> The Master said, "Sin, my *tao* is one pervading principle."[251]

Confucius declares, "Heaven produced the virtue that is in me,"[252] and asserts that if it be so ordered that his *tao* is to advance,

[245] I am aware of the difficulty of this translation, but I believe this rendering is substantially accurate.
[246] *An.* 9,5.
[247] *An.* 14,37,2.
[248] *An.* 7,5; 9,8.
[249] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 276.
[250] *An.* 15,2.
[251] *An.* 4,15.
[252] *An.* 7,22.

no mere mortal can prevent it.[253] Confucius was one of the most firm believers in metaphysics who ever lived, as Hsün Tse was one of the most thorough-going naturalists of ancient times.

Among certain of the American Indians there are medicine-men, who heal disease by magical ceremonies in which the sweat-bath figures as a part. Certain scientific medical practitioners also use the sweat-bath in healing. May we say, because their technique coincides in this case, that their theory of healing is the same? If their technique coincided in a hundred instances, we would still not infer that their philosophies were alike, nor that they would approach new problems in an identical manner. The analogy applies to Confucius and Hsün Tse. On empirical grounds Hsün Tse took over many of the moral axioms, etc., of Confucius. Hsün Tse thought they had worked, because the history, written by men pervaded with Sinism, showed that they always had worked. But Hsün Tse's theory was far different; on his principles, if these axioms failed to work in the future, they must logically have been discarded. According to Confucius, on the other hand, the only remedy for the failure of Sinism was "more Sinism."

Since he refused to accept truth as an absolute datum, cosmically established, Hsün Tse needed a theory of knowledge. It was very much the theory we have today, simply that truth is that which we arrive at when we do the best thinking of which we are capable. He carefully laid down the conditions for thought, with especial reference to lack of bias and disturbance of any sort. For this reason he has sometimes been said to have borrowed the "meditation" of Laoism, but this seems improbable. His dependence on that school of thought has probably been exaggerated, although it probably did influence him. Hsün Tse's distrust of human beings in general made him unwilling to leave thinking to the tender mercies even of the scholars, and led him to set up his theory of authoritarianism.

The doctrine that human nature is evil, and that man's goodness "is only acquired training," is Hsün Tse's most famous teaching, and caused him to be declared unorthodox. He "showed that according to Mencius' statement that virtue was just the development of innate impulses, there would be no use for the Sage-Kings or for any standards of conduct at all, such as those embodied in the concepts of *li* and *i* (proper conduct and justice). Here he

[253] *An.* 14,38,2.

made a criticism," Dubs comments, "that must have cut very deep."[254] On the contrary, the objection is easily met. Dubs, like Hsün Tse, fails to recognize the central dogma of Sinism, that goodness (*i.e.*, harmonious cooperation) is the natural, normal, proper state of all things. In the "Golden Age" men were born good, kings were sages, animals did not eat men, men were kind to each other and to animals, men followed *li* without the necessity of punishment and kings were good without admonishment from their ministers, all as a part of the naturally ordained scheme of things. It is evil (*i.e.*, disharmony) which is unnatural, abnormal, and transient. As Confucius said, "Man is born for uprightness. If a man lose his uprightness and yet live, his escape *from death* is the effect of mere good fortune."[255] It is the existence and persistence of evil, not of good, which should provoke astonishment.

As we have seen Hsün Tse so far, he is the freest thinker and the most modern spirit we have encountered. Given his empirical and experimental method of attaining and amplifying ethics and politics, we might expect that China would have made unprecedented strides of social and political amelioration. But here we encounter the final paradox of this remarkable man. As he was, in his opinions, the least traditionally-minded of his fellows, he was, in his theory of education, the most rigid authoritarian. He distrusted men, and was unwilling to allow them to think *ad libitum*. The thought of what may have been lost, by that lack of faith, is staggering. There is no other knowledge, he asserted, than the knowledge of the ancients. To acquire that knowledge it is necessary, not to think, but to listen to one's teacher. The student's studies are finished when he has so thoroughly learned the teachings of his master, and especially the *Li Ki*, that he is able to become the echo of his teacher for a new generation.[256] This rigid authoritarianism was fixed upon the Confucian school from his time.

But his rationalistic basis of ethics, and his related doctrine of the viciousness of human nature, were too heterodox and too heroic for most of the members of the Confucian school. And it is for this reason that Sinism survived, past the time of Hsün Tse, as something more than an external shell of precepts without a living heart.

[254] Dubs, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[255] *An.* 6,17.
[256] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances*, 282.

CHAPTER V

LAO TSE AND LAOISM

THE school of thought which is usually designated as "Philosophic Taoism" is referred to in this study as Laoism, for reasons stated in Chapter III. Of all the nuances of ancient Chinese thought, it is the one best calculated to catch the attention of the Occidental philosopher. A detailed study of this philosophy, by itself, is fascinating. The present purpose is, however, to orient it with regard to ancient Chinese thought as a whole.

From this point of view, Laoism is of the greatest interest. The central thesis of this system[257] is easily grasped. We have seen that the position of Confucius was that the universe is naturally good, but that for some reason it has been perverted from that state. His technique for restoring the original perfection is to find the rules by which men acted in the "Golden Age," and then to apply them as closely as "common sense" and "humanity" would allow. This certainly has a logical appeal; Lao Tse used the same premise to draw an equally logical, but very different, conclusion. If the world has within itself this natural tendency to perfection, then why tamper with it? asked Lao Tse. Instead of trying to find a set of rules to apply, should we not rather abstain from applying any rules at all, and merely let the natural perfection assert itself? Is not any attempt artificially to regulate the universe a movement away from the better to the worse?

As expounded by their defenders, these philosophies are equally logical. But men everywhere have seldom, if ever, espoused a philosophy *solely* because of its appeal to reason. This is always

[257] From this point on the word "system" is much more properly to be used, for the thinkers we now treat had to construct their ideas so as to withstand the most constant criticism from every hand.

a factor, but men's philosophies are primarily rational bases which justify them in doing that which they wish to do; they are formulas for solving practical situations (however impractical those situations may seem to us) and allowing action to proceed along a line which promises satisfactions. Islam, Christian Protestantism, "absolute idealism," "pragmatism," the belief in immortality, "neohumanism," and in fact, every religious and philosophical belief has arisen because of a practical situation which demanded it or something like it. This is by no means to say that all or any one of them has been a mere "rationalization" in the derogatory sense of the term; it is only to apply to the history of thought the modern insight concerning the secondary and instrumental nature of intellect. We may not, then, believe that Laoism came into existence merely because it was "logical." We must look for the situation which brought this one, of many possible "logical" philosophies, into existence.

We shall consider briefly three theories of its origin, that of Wieger, that of Wilhelm, and one which has not, to my knowledge, been previously advanced.

Wieger declares that Laoism shows an "indentité complète" with the Indian philosophy of the *Upanishads*.[257a] In China, Laoism, he says, is an evident innovation. Further, he declares that Chinese critics, beginning with the bibliographic index of the former Han dynasty (202 B. C.—8 A. D.) are unanimous in declaring that Laoism did not grow out of China's past, but was elaborated by the custodians of national *and foreign* records. Wieger believes, then, that Lao Tse, who was a keeper of the archives, got his philosophy from a document which at least reflected Indian thought.

The position merits thorough study, and lacking this may not be utterly rejected nor dogmatically accepted. But certain weaknesses are evident. In the first place, Wieger himself dates the earliest *Upanishads* from the eighth and the seventh centuries B. C.,[258] a scant one hundred fifty years before Lao Tse (570-490 B. C.) flourished in China. This must certainly have been a remarkably rapid case of diffusion. In the second place, scrutiny of Fr. Wieger's own account of the *Upanishads* fails to show that "complete identity" which he alleges. To be sure, there is something like that flying through the air which was one of the accom-

[257a] Wieger, *Taoisme* p. 9.

[258] Wieger, *Bouddhisme Chinois* (hereafter cited as *Bouddhisme*) p. 40.

plishments of the Taoist genii;[259] there is breath control; there is the concept of Brahman which shows some resemblances to one aspect of the *tao*. But all of these may well be what Goldenweiser calls "convergences," similarities traceable to like conditions of origin rather than to diffusion. Further, certain cardinal principles of Laoism, such as *yin-yang* duality, are utterly foreign to the *Upanishads*. But the chief reason for believing Laoism to be a Chinese rather than a Hindu product is that it can be traced as a natural development out of the Chinese past. Wieger's Chinese testimony on this point, while important, can not be admitted to be infallible.

Wilhelm agrees with the position that the fundamental postulate of cosmic harmony as the normal state is common to Confucius and to Lao Tse. He believes, however, that Lao Tse obtained the idea from the *Yi King*, or *Book of Changes*,[260] and that it was he who gave the idea to Confucius.[260a]

In the first place, Lao Tse must certainly have possessed unusually keen powers of penetration to obtain his ideas from this source. In the second place, if the reader is not by this time convinced that the idea of the cosmic *tao*, the universal harmony, was in existence long before Confucius, and had a prominent place in Chinese tradition and in the documents of which the *Shu* and the *Shi* were composed, then it is impossible to convince him here.

The explanation of Lao Tse to be put forward in this study lies along very different lines. He was only one example of a type of men who had appeared in China, from time to time, long before his day. Education in China, from ancient times until very recently, has meant, almost entirely, education for governmental office. The ambition, even of peasant families, has been to produce a member who would fill such a place. But offices were limited. The result has been a great over-supply of men trained only to govern, able to do little else, but "out of work." Chinese literature is filled with their laments. Their ranks were swelled with men discharged because they had offended their superiors and others who had resigned as a protest against the manner in which affairs were conducted. This was occurring at least two centuries before Lao

[259] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[260] This, one of the classics, is usually interpreted as a book of divination, but has also been explained in a bewildering variety of other ways. It is an enigma. See Legge's preface, vol. XVI, *Sacred Books of the East*.

[260a] Wilhelm, *Lao-tse und der Taoismus*, p. 56.

Tse.[261] The only proper and dignified course for such a scholar was to retire from the world, and to live a life bordering on that of a recluse, if he did not, in fact (as many did), become a veritable hermit.

Here we have all of the conditions for the rise of a new philosophy. The old philosophy of Sinism depended on the exercise of the technique of government, but that door was closed to these men. Could they admit themselves of no value in the world? Certainly not, if they were men! They *had* to rationalize their position. Several such rationalizations occur in the *Classics*. It is related that after Confucius had resigned his position in Lu, while he was travelling in search of another place, one of his disciples accosted a man working in a field, asking directions. The old man countered by asking who he was. Then he said:

"Disorder, like a swelling flood, spreads over the whole empire, and who is he that will change it *for you?* Than follow one who merely withdraws from this one and that one, had you not better follow those who have withdrawn from the world altogether?" *With this* he fell to covering up the seed. . . [262]

Here is an embryonic philosophy performing a function similar to that of Lao Tse's system. But the example cited, and the others which occur in the *Classics,* are merely expressions of resignation, which leave the individual, after all, admitting failure and impotence. But it was the glory of Lao Tse to have the supreme intellectual daring to turn this debit into an asset. He had the genius to declare not only that inaction was the only proper course for the disappointed man, but that it was the only proper course for every person whatsoever—indeed, the recluse, apparently impotent, was actually the most effective man in the empire. Though seemingly obscure, the man living in retirement was really the greatest and most important man in the world. It must certainly be admitted that he accomplished a magnificent stroke when he succeeded, not merely in conceiving so novel an idea, but in actually causing it, eventually, to be accepted by a very considerable portion of the Chinese world.

Of course, the matter was not stated so plainly as it is here set forth. It was developed, in true philosophical style, through a long and most intricate train of hypotheses. But certain passages of the *Tao Tê King* reveal Lao Tse's purpose of self-justification to have been central in his thinking. It will be recalled that he was keeper

[261] *Cf. Shi* p. 324-25; p. 229. *An.* 18,5-6-7-8-9-10; 14,39.
[262] *An.* 18,6,3.

of the imperial archives. This was a position which gave him little, if any, opportunity to have a hand in the control of affairs. He was, however, a man of the keenest intellect, deeply concerned, as we know, with the evils of his day, and especially abhorrent of the wars of extermination which were going on between the Chinese themselves at the time. His impotence to alter the situation must have hurt him keenly. Finally, according to tradition, he decided that the only thing for him to do was to leave the world altogether. As he was on his way to retirement, he was asked to write down his wisdom as a heritage to the world. He wrote the *Tao Tê King.*

In this book he tells us that the Sages of old (of whom he considers himself a modern representative) were subtle, abstruse, and profound to a degree which language is powerless to describe.[263] Those who follow the way which Lao Tse prescribes are always successful, even if they seem otherwise.[264] To know oneself able to accomplish anything, but to hold oneself down to an inferior place, voluntarily to seem, indeed, the least important being in the empire—this proves that one really preserves within himself the primary virtue of the totality of the universe.[265]

Very few, Lao Tse declares, recognize his worth, and few understand him. Therein lies his glory. He is mistreated because he is a sage, and misunderstood by the rabble who can not see through his unpolished manner to the precious stones which fill his bosom.[266] Other passages could be cited, but these will be sufficient evidence for anyone familiar with the psychological concepts of the "defense mechanism" and "compensation." Yet, while we may be convinced that Lao Tse received the first impulse to his system from such a source, that is no reason for undervaluing his philosophy. This psychological motive does not negate the intellectual brilliance with which he worked out his ideas, nor does it lessen their importance in Chinese history. Lao Tse is supremely significant for the reason that his thinking, in many ways antagonistic to traditional thought, broke up the rigid hold of the *old* Sinism on the intellectuals, and made possible a rethinking of problems which had been considered settled for all time. This led directly to many of the most important developments in Chinese thought.

263 *Tao Tê King* (hereafter *T.T.K.*) 15. My treatment of this work is based chiefly on Wieger's translation in his *Taoisme.*

264 *Ibid.* 23.

265 *Ibid.* 28.

266 *Ibid.* 70.

Lao Tse's chief concept was that of the *tao,* a familiar word which now has its meaning expanded somewhat. According to ancient Chinese ideas, all things were composed of *yin* and *yang.* When one pondered on the origin of things, what was more natural than to postulate a single source from which these two came? This is what Lao Tse did.[267] He called this primeval existence "the *tao.*" From this single substance, all things emanated. Yet they are still in contact with it, and, indeed, projections of it, like the tributaries of a river.[268] Within this emanation there are centers of particular importance, such as certain powerful stars, mountains, etc. These are to be considered good if they are in proper relation to the whole, bad if out of harmony with it.[269] This, it will be noted, differs little in its fundamental thought patterns from that philosophy of Sinism which we constructed without reference to Lao Tse.

But the concept of "the *tao,*" as used by Lao Tse, has been adjudged an innovation in Chinese thought, something that must have come from the outside. We have seen that the idea of "the *tao*" or "the *tao* of Heaven," as a cosmically sanctioned plan of action, dates far back of Lao Tse. Further, there are places in the *Classics* where this concept seems already to be treated as if it were a substance.[270] But what was the Chinese idea of substance? Have we not seen that the very "material" "five elements" were more nearly localizations of action-patterns than anything which the West would call "substance."[270a]

Furthermore, the character *hsing,* "element," means "to walk, to move," and *tao* is literally a road or a path. In Watters' *Essays on the Chinese Language,* p. 155, he says, "In this sense (meaning "a highway") *tao* is sometimes replaced by *hsing.*" An archaic form of the character *tao* was composed of *hsing* and another character (*Cf. ibid,* p. 153). Do not these ideas fit well together? Was not Lao Tse following the main stream of Chinese thought when he considered the *tao* to be the source from which the *yang* and the *yin,* the five *hsing,* and all other things had sprung?

It is probable that Lao Tse's profession as keeper of the archives had a strong influence on his conception of the *tao.* He had charge of the books of divination, and it was part of his duty to record

[267] Granet, *Religion,* p. 143.
[268] *T.T.K.,* 32.
[269] Wieger, *Taoisme,* p. 10.
[270] *Shu,* p. 261.
[270a] *Cf. Men.* 4(2).25-26; *Shu* pp. 70-71.

natural and celestial phenomena of any unusual character. It has been suggested by Prof. A. E. Haydon that this would inevitably have caused the processes of the cosmos to assume, in his thinking, an importance even greater than that which they possessed for every Chinese thinker. For Confucius, the statesman, the *tao* was, of course, primarily a political entity. For Lao Tse, the student of natural phenomena and divination, it was in the very nature of the case a cosmic concept.

This *tao* is described by a series of paradoxes. Doing nothing it accomplishes everything; without consciousness, it is the seat of the highest intelligence; exercising no forethought whatsoever, it governs all things. Much ingenuity has been, in my judgment, misused by some Western scholars who try to read into Lao Tse's words bits of abstruse profundity which never occurred to the Sage himself. Much of the *Tao Tê King* is so involved as to be scarcely translatable. We need not judge a philosopher to be wise in direct proportion to the degree in which he is impossible to understand.[271] The fact is that Lao Tse, in many places, deals with matter of which he himself (as he admits) has no clear conception.[272] It is a weakness, rather than a strength, in a philosophy, that its ultimate statement is a paradox; but the fatal fascination of the paradox for many minds is well known.

The first object of Lao Tse, as has been said, was to win distinction for the man who had renounced the world. He was to conform himself entirely to the *tao,* imitating it in every way.[273] By this action, he appropriated to himself the prestige, the greatness, and the glory of the very source and being of the universe. Thus to imitate the *tao* would have meant, according to Lao Tse's own logic, to do nothing (*wu wei* 無爲). But every man who advocates a return to the natural demands for himself the right to define the "state of nature." Lao Tse's program for "doing nothing" is an exacting one. One must have few interests and few desires; he must shun luxury; he must be guided by charity, simplicity, humility; he must be equally benevolent to the good and to the bad, and must trust the insincere as implicitly as he trusts those who have proved faithful.[274] One must wish for nothing, for then

[271] *Cf.* Wilhelm, *op. cit.,* p. 53.
[272] *T.T.K.* 54.
[273] *T.T.K.* 54.
[274] *T.T.K.* 19; 53; 67; 8; 49.

he will not be disappointed; he must strive for nothing, for then all things will spontaneously come to him.[275] (I suggest in passing that this idea, that self-abasement is the road to fame and neglect of profit is the road to riches, may be traceable in part to what Granet has indicated as the "potlatch" idea in China,[276] and to that idea if "reciprocity" as a cosmic and ethical necessity, which pervades old Sinism).[277]

Lao Tse sets himself in absolute opposition to Confucius' recommendation that the person seeking understanding should study; study, he asserts, is worse than a waste of time, for it multiplies harmful notions. The proper way is to meditate on the *tao*.[278] This Laoist meditation may have been a genuine mystic trance, although this has not been proved, and is certainly not clear on the basis of the *Tao Tê King*.

It is evident that the techniques of Lao Tse and of Confucius were very different. The similarity of their basic metaphysic has been obscured as a result of the opposition of their practical teachings. The disciples of the two men were constantly at war, if only with words. Even in the *Tao Tê King* and in the *Analects* we find barbed shafts which, though they did not name each other, Confucius and Lao Tse certainly intended to exchange. Lao Tse declares that virtue and righteousness, filial piety and paternal affection (all dear to the heart of Confucius), were never heard of until after the world had fallen into disorder; the way to regain that natural harmony which is the only hope of the world is to dispense with all of these artificial, and therefore vain, attempts to win felicity.[279] The Confucian politician, Lao Tse says, deems himself the born master and the professional saviour of all things.[280] Confucius returns his fire no less shrewdly.[281]

On the other hand, the similarity of the two philosophies stands out in bold relief when we take up Lao Tse's technique for political control. To be sure, his dictum to "empty the minds and fill the stomachs, enfeeble the initiative and strengthen the backs" of men,

[275] *T.T.K.* 7; 9; 13; 15.
[276] Granet, *Danses*, p. 135, pp. 583-85.
[277] *An.* 15,23; *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*) p. 65.
[278] *T.T.K.* 48; 1.
[279] *Ibid.* 18; 19.
[280] *Ibid.* 27.
[281] *An.* 9,26; 14,46; 15,30; 17,1,2; 17,22; 17,8,3. *Cf.* also *The Doctrine of the Mean*, 11,1; 13,1.

and to keep the people in "ignorance and apathy"[282] conflicts with Confucius. In similar opposition stands his statement that the (Laoist) sage is not beneficent to the people whom he governs, but treats them as mere pawns, since the sage must imitate destiny, and destiny shows not the slightest regard for human concerns.[283] This last is a heroic bit of philosophizing which seems to have been thrown in "for good measure," since it stands in direct contradiction to other portions of the document.[284]

Lao Tse gives several formulas for government in various chapters. Let us start with those which seem least like that of Confucius. We are told that the empire is an extremely delicate mechanism, with which one has no business to meddle. The emperor and his ministers and assistants in the government were not put in their places to interfere; their duty is to meditate on the *tao*.[285] The Laoist sage must occupy no position in the government save that of chief of all the officers, exercising a general supervision over them all but not bothering about any details.[286] This supports my hypothesis that Lao Tse's aim was rather to exalt the members of a very small group, than to save men in general, since the number who could occupy such a position was strictly limited. In his position as chief of the officers, the sage is to allow all beings to function according to their nature, without restraint, *except* that he is to repress such harmful excesses as power, wealth, and ambition![287]

But the *reductio ad absurdum* comes when Lao Tse tells us, in Chapter 80, what he would do "if he were king." He would be very careful indeed to keep capable men out of office (since they would try to use their intelligence, and spoil things). He would prevent his subjects from travelling, and make them so afraid of accidents and death that they would not dare set foot on a boat, nor even mount a carriage. He would forbid all use of arms. He would force them to give up all learning, to forget how to write, and to return to the ancient system of knotting cords for what few records they wished to keep. He would sever all communications, so that while his people could hear the crowing of the

[282] *T.T.K.* 3; 65.
[283] *Ibid.* 5.
[284] *Ibid.* 8; 49; 60; 67.
[285] *Ibid.* 29; 2; 62.
[286] *Ibid.* 28.
[287] *Ibid.* 29.

cocks and the barking of the dogs of neighboring villages, they would die without knowing anything more about them. Thus he would make them healthy, agreeable, and peaceful. The chief difference between the avowed regulation of Confucius, and the policy of allowing utter freedom which Lao Tse preached, is that the latter eventuates in a much more rigid despotism. The practical meaning of Lao Tse's commandment to "do nothing" (contrary to nature) is identical with that of Confucius' maxim "Follow the *tao* of Heaven."

It is fruitless to attempt to account for Chapter 80 of the *Tao Tê King,* just outlined, as the outcome of any system of metaphysics. It is the result, rather, of the complete disgust with the civilization of his day, and the great abhorrence of war and bloodshed, which Lao Tse had come to acquire. Similarly, it was not his metaphysics primarily, but his fear of death and his desire to live, which account for the techniques for great prolongation of life which we find elaborated even in Lao Tse's own writing. This is the background of the Laoist *hsien* (geni or "immortal") concept, and the Laoist alchemy which were elaborated in great detail in later books, and soon came to occupy the center of the stage in connection with the Laoist doctrines. But these things are peripheral to Sinism, and we must come back to the main line.

As a final statement, let it be said that the difference between Confucius and Lao Tse was not chiefly one of world-view, nor even, if we look closely, of technique;[288] the difference was, rather, that Confucius was, first of all, a practical statesman seeking to save the world, while Lao Tse was a disheartened philosopher, despairing of the world and fleeing from it, yet driven by the imperative necessity of vindicating the worth of his own personality; in the process of rehabilitating the latter, he achieved a technique for overcoming his despair of the world.

Yang Chu was a personal disciple of Lao Tse. Wilhelm[289] opines that he did not understand the Sage very well. On the contrary, I think he understood the logical outcome of Lao Tse's position better than did Lao Tse himself. If the universe was a mechanism so ordered as best to run itself without interference, then why bother with it in any way? And if the thing to do was to be natural, then why not satisfy one's desires, and live as happily as possible,

[288] Compare *T.T.K.* 17; *An.* 13,6; *Men.* 7(1),5.

[289] *Op. cit.,* p. 103.

without regret? Yang Chu is usually described as a fatalist, an "Epicurean," and an egoist.[290] He has been represented more harshly than justly by some writers to whom these points of view are scandalous.

The life of Chuang Tse, the most famous of Lao Tse's successors as champion of Laoism, is little known, probably because of his deliberate and successful attempt to live in that obscurity which the Master had preached. An amusing story is related concerning the reply which he gave to emissaries sent to ask him to become a minister at the court of the king of Ch'ou. They found him fishing, and when they had delivered their message, he replied, without turning his head: "I have heard that there is, at your court, a tortoise, sacrificed three thousand years ago, and used for divination. Do you think that tortoise would prefer to be at the court, or to be here, wagging his tail in the mud?" The emissaries said that, of course, he would prefer to be waggling his tail in the mud. "So would I," replied Chuang Tse.[291]

Himself apparently a younger contemporary of Mencius, Chuang Tse devoted himself to the task of expanding and systematising the philosophy of the *Tao Tê King,* and to refuting the teachings of the members of the Confucian school. He did this with great keenness, and a wealth of clever anecdote. He expressed the greatest admiration for Confucius himself, whom he held to have been converted to Laoism in his sixtieth year. This story seems highly dubious, but it was a master stroke on Chuang Tse's part, whether or not he executed it with conscious guile. Chuang Tse is credited with having performed for Laoism the same service of wide dissemination which Mencius did for the teachings of Confucius.

Lieh Tse is the name given to a book of Laoist writings, of importance and size second only to that bearing the name of Chuang Tse. Lieh Tse has also been considered to be the name of an early Laoist, whom Wieger believes was born in the latter half of the fifth century B. C. The existence of such a figure is in very great doubt, however, and a prevalent opinion is that the name was used to cover a compilation of Laoist writings of various dates, some of them early. Wilhelm says that the redaction of the book can not be placed earlier than the fourth century A.D.[292] It will be

[290] The sources for Yang Chu are *Lieh Tse,* chaps. 6-7 (see Wieger's *Taoisme,* v. II), and *Men.* 3(2),9; 7(1),26; 7(2),26.

[291] *Chuang Tse,* Chap. 17 (see Wieger, *Taoisme,* v. II, p. 347).

[292] Wilhelm, *op. cit.,* pp. 102-3.

noted that Buddhism had been in China, at that time, for more than two centuries. Wilhelm says:

> Charakteristisch ist, dass in Form von Gleichnissen manche Geschichten erzählt werden, die z.T. ins Wunderbare spielen und die Kraft einer auf Vereinheitlichung gerichteten Yoga-praxis zeigen sollen.[293]

We are now in position to return to the consideration of Wieger's contention that Laoism must have resulted from a knowledge by Lao Tse of the philosophy of the Indian *Upanishads*. But in his reconstruction of early Laoism, Wieger has used both *Lieh Tse* and *Chuang Tse* along with, and on the same basis as the writings of Lao Tse. On this basis, he makes a picture which does, indeed, show great similarities to India. I am willing to admit that some Indian influences *might* have reached Chuang Tse, and, on Wilhelm's dating of *Lieh Tse*, it is certain that that book must have been influenced by Indian thought, and especially Buddhism. But the problem of Laoism is fundamentally a problem of origin, and must be solved on the basis of Lao Tse. He does not show any clear signs of Indian influence; his thought is a logical development of old Sinism. Laoism must, therefore, be considered a development, chiefly and probably entirely, of indigenous Chinese thought.

[293] *Ibid.* p. 103.

CHAPTER VI

MO TSE

THE thinkers of every race and every age show a distinct tendency to emphasize their differences from each other, while ignoring the most complete identities in their fundamental premises. It is said that, during the Middle Ages, many Franciscan monks would sooner show charity to the blackest heretic than to one of their Dominican brothers in Christ. The bitterest enmities grew up between medieval theologians over such questions as how many angels could stand on the point of a needle. But today, we lump all of these men together as representatives of a single, and a narrowly dogmatic, system of thought.

This tendency has shown itself to an almost unbelievable extent in the history of Chinese thought. Here we have the spectacle of various men, expounding the same philosophy with no more of difference than that one emphasizes more strongly one phase, while another places most stress on another factor, each of whom declares the views of the others to be so dangerous that their spread endangers the very foundations of the universe. These petty quarrels (they were often no more than that) mean little in themselves, but when we consider that the accusations exchanged in them have, in many cases, been written into the accepted histories of Chinese thought, it becomes apparent that they have obscured our understanding of the history of Chinese philosophy to an alarming degree.

In the cases of the thinkers already dealt with, the error is difficult to apprehend. As between Lao Tse and Confucius, there are not only mutual recriminations, but apparent differences of the widest scope. It is only when we penetrate the surface, and look, beyond grandiose generalizations, at their fundamental assumptions

and their practical programs, that we observe the similarities. But when we come to take up Mo Tse the case is quite otherwise. To be sure, Mo Tse was considered the deadly enemy of the Confucian school, and Mencius excoriates him, while he returned attacks with good will and a ready wit. Thus there has grown up the legend that Moism is one of the doctrines antithetic to "Confucianism" or Sinism. But if any student of average intelligence were given the *Analects* and the writings of Mo Tse to study side by side, it is doubtful if he could fail to see the fundamental identity of the two systems, unless he had had the "advantage" of a previous acquaintance with the tradition which denies it.

The dates of Mo Tse[294] are in some doubt. Those given by Yi Pao Mei, 470-391 B.C.,[295] are probably accurate enough for the present purpose. Mo Tse was given the usual education of a young scholar of the "Confucian" school, destined for government. *Huai Nan Tse* (chap. 21) says of him:

> Mo Tse was trained in the orthodox school and disciplined in Confucian ideas. But he felt that the code of propriety was too troublesome and annoying and that elaborate funerals consumed too much money and impoverished the people; that they were unwholesome to life and obstacles to industry. Thereupon he rebelled against the norms of Chou and adopted the regime of Hsia.

Like Confucius, Mo Tse traveled about a great deal, looking for an opportunity to serve as minister to some state, and so put his ideas into practice. He seems, however, to have found only one post, and that for a short time, in Sung. He gathered a number of disciples about him, but did not succeed in founding a permanent school. This was due in great part, no doubt, to the opposition of the "regular" Confucianists to his teachings. "It is no exaggeration to say that the neglect of Motse the man, his system, and his works since the Christian era had been all but universal until the middle of the eighteenth century A.D."[296] The recent interest in Mo Tse has been largely due to certain real or fancied resemblances of his teachings to Christianity.

[294] Mo Tse means, of course "Master Mo" or "The Philosopher Mo." His full name was Mo Ti. The character *mo* is pronounced either *mo* or *mei*, so that the philosopher may be referred to as Mo Tse, Mei Tse, Mo Ti, Mei Ti, or by the latinization "Micius."

[295] Yi-pao Mei, *Ethical and Political Philosophy of Motse* (Ph.D. Thesis, Chicago), p. 31.

[296] Mei, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Mo Tse, like Confucius, was tremendously in earnest. He was genuinely concerned over the poverty and suffering of his people, and no sacrifice of time or personal comfort was too great for him to make for the cause of their welfare, to which he had devoted his life. Like Confucius, Mencius, and Lao Tse, he looked with the greatest abhorrence on the wholesale slaughter which characterized the China of his day, and the eradication of war waged for mere greed was his chief passion. It was this practical interest, this desire above all other things to ameliorate the condition of humanity, which was responsible for the attacks made upon him by the Confucianists, much more than any difference in basic philosophy. Had Mo Tse not preached against the ruinous funerals which often wiped out the patrimony of the poor, and against the prescribed three years of complete inaction in mourning, Mencius and others would probably have been a little more willing to see that his doctrine of "universal love" was, after all, only another way of stating the plea of Confucius for human cooperation and social harmony.

Nevertheless, it was about this doctrine of "universal love" that the fight on Mo Tse centred. Let Mo Tse state it in his own words:

> Partiality is to be replaced by universality. . . Now when everyone regards the states of others as he regards his own, who would attack the other's state? Others are regarded like one's self. When everyone regards the houses of others as he regards his own, who would disturb the others' houses? . . . Now, when the states and cities do not attack and seize each other and when the clans and individuals do not disturb and harm one another—is this a calamity or a benefit to the world? Of course it is a benefit. When we come to think about the several benefits in regard to their cause, how have they arisen? Have they arisen out of hate of others and injuring others? Of course we should say no. We should say that they have arisen out of love of others and benefiting others. If we should classify one by one all those who love others and benefit others, should we find them to be partial or universal? Of course we should say they are universal. Now, since universal love is the cause of the major benefits of the world, therefore Motse proclaims universal love to be right.[297]

This doctrine has been conceived, in modern as well as in ancient times, to strike at the very roots of Sinism and the teachings of Confucius. In this connection, four questions are pertinent con-

[297] Mei, *op. cit.*, (pt. 2) p. 96.

cerning the doctrine of "universal love": (1) Does it remove the sanction of "the will of Heaven"? (2) Does it undermine filial piety? (3) Does it weaken the political system by doing away with any special loyalty to one's rulers? (4) Does it condemn the punishment of criminals and evil-doers generally? If it can be shown that the doctrine, as interpreted by Mo Tse, did none of these things, it can hardly be held that the teaching was a menace to Sinism.

(1) "The will of Heaven" was specifically invoked as *the* sanction above all others for the doctrine of universal love.[298]

(2) It did not undermine filial piety, Mo Tse held, since it prescribed, not less love for one's parents, but only more love toward other people, and was in the end designed directly to benefit one's parents, by bettering the condition of the world.

(3) The practice of universal love, as prescribed by Mo Tse, could not interfere with the government, because of the other central tenet of Moism, that of "identification with the superior."

> All you people of the district shall identify yourselves with the lord of the state, and shall not unite with the subordinates. What the lord thinks to be right, all shall think to be right; what he thinks to be wrong, all shall think to be wrong. . . For the lord of the state is naturally the (most) virtuous of the state. If all the people in the state follow the example of their lord, then how can the state be in disorder?[299]
>
> Righteousness is the standard. A standard is not to be given by the subordinates to the superior, but by the superior to the subordinates. Therefore, while the common people should spare no pains at work, they may not make the standard at will. . . The emperor may not make the standard at will (either). There is Heaven to give him the standard. . . . The emperor gives the standard to the High Duke, to the feudal lords, to the scholars, and (through these intermediaries) to the common people.[300]

As a safeguard against incompetent officials, the moral sense of the people is trusted to cause them to refuse to identify their will with that of such persons.

All of this is very regular, Confucian, and Sinistic.

(4) We are at the heart of the testing of the Moist doctrine of

[298] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 167.
[299] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 66.
[300] *Ibid.* (pt.2) pp. 148-49.

"universal love" when we ask if its author advocated that it be carried to the point of condoning crime, or at least allowing it to go unpunished, because one must love even the criminal. To state the question generally, did Mo Tse intend, by his principle, merely to emphasize the need for an attitude of mutual cooperation within society, or was he espousing a soft sentimentalism which he would carry to the point of sacrificing the good of humanity in order to keep from harming a single human being?

It will be recalled that Confucius defined benevolence, on one occasion, as "to love men." Confucius was an outstanding preacher of cooperation, kindliness, and altruism. Yet this did not prevent him from advocating punishment when justice, and the good of society, seemed to require it. The position of Mo Tse is difficult to distinguish, here, from that of Confucius, unless one concern himself with very nice shades of emphasis indeed.

Mo Tse was greatly concerned with the problem of war, as has been noted. The arguments he used against it were the good Confucian ones, that aggression did not accord with the laws of Heaven, and brought destruction in its wake for the aggressor. However, Mo Tse advocated defensive war, and is said to have trained his scholars in the art of defensive warfare. There is a strong tradition that he was himself an engineer of some accomplishment.[301]

Mo Tse was such an opponent of offensive war that he is said to have made long journeys to try to dissuade rulers, whom he had heard were contemplating war, from carrying out their attacks. Yet he, like Confucius and Mencius, differentiated between just and unjust wars. Campaigns which were made in accordance with right and with the will of Heaven were not, he declared, to be called "attacks," but "punishment," and these he approved.[301a]

This is certainly sufficient to show that Mo Tse was not a mere sentimentalist, but held the application of universal love and mutual help within the boundaries of definite standards of conduct.

It is evident, then, that Mo Tse's doctrine of "universal love" was not calculated to remove the sanction of the will of Heaven, to undermine filial piety, to weaken the political system of graded authority, nor to make the enforcement of standards of conduct impossible by prohibiting punishments. It is true enough that Mo Tse did utter a heresy, from the standpoint of Confucius' teachings,

[301] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 209.

[301a] Mei, *op. cit.,* (pt. 2) p. 121.

when he said that men should love the parents of others as well as they loved their own parents. But this, important as it may have been, can hardly be considered a difference of opinion on a point fundamental to philosophy. On the contrary, the motive lying back of it, which was the desire to promote social cooperation and to reduce friction and war within the Chinese world, was decidedly a Confucian motive.

It has been shown that Mo Tse may not properly be said to have differed radically from Confucius, in his philosophy, on the basis of the Moist doctrine of "universal love."

Again, the so-called "pragmatism" of Mo Tse, his emphasis on the "usefulness" of things, may be made to seem very different from Confucius' own standard of ethics. When Mo Tse was asked whether his principle of "universal love," although it might be a good thing, could be of any use, he replied, "If it were not useful, then even I would disapprove of it."[302] On another occasion, Mo asked a member of the Confucian school why the Confucians studied music. The Confucian replied, "Music is pursued for music's sake." Mo Tse proceeded to ridicule him.[303] It is worthwhile to dwell on the incident, since one writer has declared that it makes clear Mo Tse's "departure from the Confucian approach." Such a statement is typical of the carelessness with which some scholars have interpreted Confucius. The fact is that the "Confucianist" mentioned had learned his lessons very poorly. Confucius was very explicit in holding that the study of music had a positive, normative value, as well as a definite usefulness in ceremonial.

> It is by the *Odes* that the mind is aroused.
> It is by *li* that the character is established.
> It is from Music that the finish is received.[304]
> The Master said, "If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with *li?* If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?"[305]

Further citations, of similar purport, might be made from Confucius, and even from Mencius.[306] For Confucius, as for Mo Tse,

[302] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 97.
[303] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 258.
[304] *An.* 8,8.
[305] *An.* 3,3.
[306] *An* 17,4; 17,11. *Men.* 1(2),1; 4(1),27.

the ultimate value of any practice is that it contributes to the welfare of human beings.

It must be remembered that, for all of the genuinely Sinist philosophers, the cosmic order was naturally oriented to harmonize with a flourishing human society. We are not surprised, therefore, when Mo Tse asks, "But how can there be anything that is good but not useful?" For all of these men, the ultimate measure of value is the capacity to contribute to human welfare.

The formula for Mo Tse's pragmatism ran somewhat as follows: The doctrines and practices of the ancient sage-kings were a perfect expression of the will of Heaven. The will of Heaven is that the people shall be peaceful, prosperous, and happy. *Therefore,* if (as is often the case) the doctrines and practices of the ancient sage-kings are in some doubt, it is only necessary to find out what will make the people peaceful, prosperous, and happy, in order to recover the ways of the ancient sage-kings in their pristine purity.

But there is never any doubt that Mo Tse is a confirmed traditionalist. Doctrines "should be based on the deeds of the ancient sage-kings."[307] His faith in the absolute perfection of the ways of those kings who had been approved by Sinist history is well shown in the following passage:

> Mo Tse said: "Any word, any action, that is beneficial to Heaven, the spirits, and the people, is to be carried out. Any word, any action, that is harmful to Heaven, the spirits, and the people, is to be abandoned. Any word, any action, that is in harmony with the (ways of the) sage-kings of the three dynasties, Yao, Shun, Yü, T'ang, Wên, and Wu, is to be carried out. Any word, any action, that is in agreement with the wicked kings of the three dynasties . . . . is to be abandoned.[308]

Time after time, Mo Tse appeals to tradition for support of his contentions. The citations which he thus makes have provided no unimportant source for criticism of some of the older historical documents.

But it would be a mistake to give the impression that Mo appeals to precisely the same traditions to which Confucius and his followers had recourse. There were certain practices, such as the three years of mourning, in support of which the Confucianists could cite perfectly good tradition, but which Mo Tse could not approve, since

[307] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 200.
[308] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 244.

he believed that their strict application would result in great harm to society.[309] He used the well-known method of "appealing from antiquity, to antiquity more remote." As he told Kung Meng Tse, a Confucianist, "you are following only Chow and not Hsia. Your antiquity does not go back far enough."[310] The practical conclusions which Mo drew from his appeal to antiquity were in some cases very different from the practices approved by Confucius and the Confucians, and these differences are sufficient to account for the bitter enmity between the two factions. But the underlying philosophy (in which we are primarily interested) was the same. The mere fact that Mo Tse selected his traditions does not differentiate him, for Confucius and Mencius did the same thing, and admitted that they did.[311]

The fundamental philosophy of Mo Tse is Sinism, simple, pure, and unmixed. He believes, with an unquenchable faith, in the basic goodness of the cosmos, and in the existence of a natural tendency which is always working to reinstate, for man, that good life in a good world which was the ancient and the natural state. Government was established by Heaven, for the benefit of the people. To lead them, Heaven chose the most virtuous man in the empire to be emperor. The rulers are, therefore, the recipients of a sacred trust, which they can not forsake with impunity.[312] Likewise, the minor rulers and their fiefs were ordained by Heaven, and those who use force to steal the latter are destroying the harmony of the world and making prosperity impossible.[313] With Confucius, Mo Tse holds that the most effective way to restore order and felicity is to exalt the virtuous men of the empire, and to place them in office, so that they may direct the government.

This discussion of Mo Tse could not be closed more fittingly than by a statement of his own, in which he sums up his Sinistic faith, simply and unequivocally:

> He who obeys the will of Heaven, loving universally and benefitting others, will obtain rewards. He who opposes the will of Heaven, by being partial and unfriendly and harming others, will incur punishment.[314]

[309] *Cf. ibid.* (pt.2) pp. 135-41. Mo Tse makes out a convincing case here against the mourning regulations approved by Confucius.
[310] *Ibid.* (pt.2) p. 254.
[311] *An.* 9,3; 15,10. *Men.* 7(2),3.
[312] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 77. Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 210.
[313] Wieger, *Histoire des Croyances,* p. 211.
[314] Mei, *op. cit.* (pt.2) p. 149.

CHAPTER VII.

POPULAR RELIGION

THE major portion of this study has been devoted to the Chinese "intellectuals" of our period, while comparatively little space has been given to things popular. This accords with the accepted traditions of scholarship, which has, until recently, given but little attention to popular ideas, popular religion, and cultural history, as opposed to high philosophy, sacred scriptures, and political history. Against the charge of remissness, in this connection, the scholar may defend himself, however, by pointing out that the materials bequeathed to him, with which he must work, tell him very little of the ways of the common people, but deal almost exclusively with the more "elevated" strata of society. If this be true everywhere, it is doubly true of China.[315]

The reason for our lack of knowledge of the people, as distinguished from the intellectuals, is self-evident. Without archeology, we are chiefly dependent for our information upon written records. In any but a modern civilization, the very fact that a man is able to write usually signifies that he belongs in a class apart from the common people, for whom he often has the greatest disdain. He would seldom think of soiling his papyrus, or parchment, or bamboo, or silk, by recording the ordinary comings and goings of mere peasants. The "nobler" themes of philosophy, and the courtly and religious life of the aristocracy are his subjects, and concerning

315 This is especially the case because of the absence, verging on relative totality, of archeological excavation in China. It surely cannot long remain true that the oldest of the great cultures living today is also the one about which we know least. Archeological work has already begun on a small scale, and it may confidently be expected that means will be provided, before many years have gone by, to fill this appalling and colossal blank in the history of mankind. The beginning of the great awakening may already be seen, in Bulletin No. 10 (April, 1929), of the "American Council of Learned Societies," entitled "Promotion of Chinese Studies."

these he never tires of telling us the same things over and over again.

Happy it is then when we can run across so unusual a work as the *Lun Hêng* or *Scale of Discourse*, written by the eccentric Wang Chung about 83 A. D. Wang received the usual education for a political career, but not without the necessity of struggling for himself. He acquired the usual self-confidence of the self-made man, with the result that when he received a small office he not only thought that he knew more about how to run things than did his superiors, but made the mistake of telling them so. This resulted in an early termination of his career. Embittered, he retired and wrote books, of which only the *Lun Hêng* survives. Its most frequently recurrent theme is that a man's career, and his winning of honors or failure to do so, do not at all depend upon his deserts, but only upon an utterly blind fate. Second only to this is his delight in dwelling upon the utter incapacity and imbecility of almost all of those in power, and their complete inability to recognize a man of parts when they see him. But it is not for these cleverly disguised "defense mechanisms" that Wang's book is cited here.

Wang conceives himself as a crusader against the "silly superstitions" of his day, and in preaching against them he sketches them in detail. Because of these descriptions, his lengthy volume (which has been handed down to us almost intact) is of priceless value. Certain cautions are necessary in using it, however. It must be remembered that Wang himself is after all a member (albeit not in very good standing) of the literati. His material is not all based on personal observation. Much of it is based on older literary sources, and he often quotes verbatim from the *Shan Hai King* and other works, as Forke has shown in the careful notes to his translation.[316] Furthermore, we must remember that, notwithstanding the very modern ring of occasional passages, Wang was a true child of his age, and held some ideas which we find quite as "absurd" as those which he so characterised. Lastly, Wang likes to argue, and in order to make a point will not hesitate completely to reverse a position which he has defended no more than ten pages previously. For all of these reasons, his testimony must always be taken with some reservation.

Western writers have called Wang a "heretic," and he has never been very popular in China. His heresy would seem to lie chiefly

[316] Alfred Forke, *Lun Hêng*, 2 vols. Quotations from Wang, used herein, are taken from Forke, though sometimes slightly altered on the basis of the text.

in his willingness to subject almost everything, no matter how sacred, to the scrutiny of his very keen critical faculty. It has been said that Chinese thinkers did not bother much about systematising their philosophies. Wang, although conspicuously inconsistent himself, was merciless in pointing out the most embarassing discrepancies in the thinking of others, and even in the *Classics*. Little wonder that he has not been popular!

A careful study of the *Lun Hêng* provides a standard by which it is possible to judge, in some degree, what was the relation of that changing and evolving philosophy which has been called Sinism, to popular thought in China in the first century A. D. and thereabouts.

The first fact brought out by such a comparative study is that Sinism is a philosophy of the state, of society as a whole, while popular thought has to do with the individual, or at most with the family. Sinism is concerned with government, with people *en masse;* the individual as such counts for little with it, whereas in popular thought the individual is everything. Sinism has nothing to do with the illness of an individual, unless he be the emperor or some other very important person, but formulas for curing even the most obscure peasant have an important place in the popular lore. This body of popular knowledge includes techniques for meeting all of the life-needs of individuals, such as protection from death, provision for welfare after death, protection from ghosts, protection on journeys, the interpretation of dreams and other omens, and general guarantees of livelihood, long life, and offspring.

It is plain that these techniques would not have been confined, in their exercise, to the plebeians alone. The philosopher, the ruler and the statesman, were also men, experiencing the desires and meeting the crises of men. And while it is true that they might have trusted in the certainty of that felicity which Sinism promised for the faithful discharge of their duties, not all of them did. Confucius is a conspicuous exception,[317] but Wang repeatedly accuses the scholars of his day of having the fullest credence in every sort of charms and auguries (I,525-526; II,250,393,402). Further, it is well-nigh impossible to draw any certain line between the various techniques for divination, protection, etc., which are mentioned as appearing promiscuously among the people, and those which are mentioned and sanctioned in the *Classics* themselves. Popular Laoism, developing along lines foreshadowed in the *Tao Tê King*, be-

[317] *An.* 7,34.

came almost entirely a complex of techniques for securing longevity and other values for the individual.

Even to catalogue the various popular ideas and techniques which were extant would require an entire work. Such a task is quite beyond the possibilities of this chapter. The most that can be done here is to indicate their nature. Certain of them are evidently based on the agricultural life of the people, probably survivals from earlier times. Such ceremonies are the rain sacrifice (II, 335), the practice of offering the first-fruits before eating of the new crop,[318] the offerings to the five household *shên* (I, 517), the spring ploughing ceremonies in which clay figures of men and women labouring in the fields were set up (II, 355), etc. The Han emperors went to some pains to restore the ancient agricultural rituals, which had fallen into desuetude in the disorders preceding their reign.[319] While many of these practices had impressed themselves upon Sinism, and were definitely a part of it, the reverse process of modification of the ceremonies by Sinism itself does not appear to have operated conspicuously.

Another factor in the formation of the popular ideology, which we cannot, as yet, begin accurately to gauge, is foreign influence. That it did operate we may be sure. Precisely how it operated must be determined by future research. One very important ingredient, the cycle of the twelve animals (corresponding to the signs of the zodiac) has been held by Chavannes to be Turkish in origin, and of late introduction into China.[320]

Still another origin of these popular ideas is the pun. When we consider that the Chinese vocalize some thousands of characters with a few hundreds of sounds, and that they make up all of their characters out of a small number of basic elements, it is readily seen that puns, both auditory and visual, must occur constantly. These were, and are, believed to be fraught with the deepest significance. The characters which mean, respectively, "peach-tree" and "be gone!" are both pronounced *t'ao*. This is perhaps why peach-wood is considered a sure protection against spectres. Wang tells us:

> One avoids grinding a knife over a well—lest it fall into the well, or, as some say, because the character *hsing* 刑 (capital punishment) is composed of *ching* 井 (a well) and *tao* 刀 (knife). Grinding a knife over a well, the knife and the well

[318] *Li Ki* (in *S.B.E.*) p. 75.
[319] Granet, *Religion,* pp. 63, 126. [320] *T'oung Pao,* 1906, pp. 52, 84.

face each other, and one apprehends suffering capital punishment (II, 385).

A whole system of divination was based on the dissection of written characters.[321] Still another sort of pun is represented by the case in which a man, suffering from a skin disease known as "rat," cures it by eating a cat, since cats eat rats. The number of such practices, based on puns, is endless.

The general metaphysical principles of Sinism are found in the popular beliefs.

> People universally believe that he who is good meets with happiness, and that evil-doers are visited with misfortune. They believe that Heaven sends down happiness or misfortune in response to man's doings, and that the rewards graciously given by the sovereigns to the virtuous are visible, whereas the requital of Heaven and Earth is not always apparent. There is nobody, high or low, clever or imbecile, who would disagree with this view (I, 156).

Harmony is the ideal still, and people look back longingly to the times of "universal peace," and hope that they may be reproduced in the future as they existed under the ancient sage-kings. Omens such as vermilion grass, springs of wine, the flying phoenix, sweet dew, "the brilliant star," auspicious grain (a special variety which never grew in ordinary times), the marvelous "meat fan," the monthly plant (a kind of automatic botanical calendar), the "indicator" (a plant which grew in the palace and pointed out wicked persons), mountains giving birth to chariots and lakes producing boats, all were considered the concomitants of such a harmonious epoch. In such a time people were believed to agree perfectly together. There were no robberies, there was wind only once in five days (but it did not howl in the boughs), and it rained once every ten days but did not wash away the earth from the roots of the crops (II, 315). Here is the Sinistic "Utopia" made specific and popular. In such a time, people were taller and more long-lived than usual (I, 315), the sun and the moon were specially brilliant (II, 324), and gold and gems were plentiful (II, 215).

The *yang* and *yin* and the five *hsing* figure very prominently in the popular ideas, but they are probably older than Sinism. In order to obtain some idea of the way in which Sinism is reflected in popular thought, let us arbitrarily select certain test factors of Sinism and then inquire if these have had any influence on popular ideas.

[321] Doré, *Researches into Chinese Superstitions,* vol. IV, pp. 356-62.

For this purpose, the following will serve: the ruler, Heaven, the sage, the governmental officers, the four geographical quarters.

With regard to rulers, both the emperor and the feudatories, the usual formulas of Sinism seem to have been taken over by people in general. The ruler is at the center of things; if he does well, all things in his territory prosper, if he does not, all goes badly. If the ruler becomes angry, he causes droughts; his dissipation brings floods (II, 343). When the sovereign punishes, it becomes cold; he must be careful, then, to punish only in the fall, not in midsummer, lest he blight the crops. The reverse is the case with the giving of rewards (II, 119). The government has the general responsibility of keeping the *yin* and the *yang* in harmony; the growth of insects in unusual numbers is traceable to the failure of the government in this duty (II, 367).

In conformity with the ancient Chinese theory, the emperor rules as the viceroy of Heaven. So long as he is virtuous, he certainly prospers, but if he departs from the right way, Heaven warns him by causing extraordinary occurrences, such as comets, etc. If he still continues in his evil ways, calamities are first visited on his people, and finally on himself (I, 109, 119, 126). Thousands of omens, of every conceivable sort, are listed by Wang as having appeared as warnings or felicitations for bad or good emperors.[322]

An emperor is believed to be personally very different from ordinary men. The marks of his future greatness are on his body at the time of birth (I. 131). This belief is found in the Occident, also, of course. Certain of the more ancient kings were believed to be no more than half human in form, having the faces of dragons, etc. Huang Ti was able, it is said, to talk at birth (II, 124).

T'ien, Heaven, appears in the *Lun Hêng* as a very tangible entity. *T'ien shên,* the "spirit," "intelligence," or "essence" of Heaven is an appellation which Wang Ch'ung employs frequently. Heaven has a body (II, 155). The *shên* of Heaven lives in certain constellations, just as a king lives in his various palaces. In the popular imagination, Heaven did not merely punish kings, nor visit calamities only on society as a whole; it might even visit its wrath on individuals, striking them dead with bolts of thunder. Such a death was a sure sign of guilt (I, 294). It might also order the

[322] I,137,235,245. II,161,206,207,215,216,306,309. *Cf.* also H. G. Creel, *Chinese Divination as Indicated by the Lun Hêng* (D.B. Thesis, Chicago), pp. 10-23.

myriad spirits, of whom it was master, to punish recalcitrant individuals. This was the more usual practice, but personal manifestations of Heaven were not uncommon. The genealogies of certain royal houses were traced back to *liaisons* between *T'ien,* manifested as a dragon or a giant, and a female ancestor. It was believed that the widely used divination by the tortoise-shell was a direct interrogation of Heaven (I, 182). The noise made by wind was believed by some persons to be the voice of Heaven and Earth (II, 173). Wang goes so far as to declare that "even Heaven may be induced to respond, by tricks." Certainly, this is a far cry from the lofty conception of Heaven entertained by most of the Sinistic philosophers. Yet the place of Heaven, as supreme governor of the world, remains the same.

Popular fancy invested the sage with marvelous powers much like those which it gave the emperor. Although Mencius specifically said that sages were not different in species from common men,[323] such an idea could not have been expected to win currency. According to Wang Ch'ung, even the *ju,* (literati) spiritual posterity of Mencius, declared that a special essence of Heaven replaced human sperm in the birth of sages (I, 318). Since the sage was distinguished by his powers of knowledge, these were raised to the *n*th power by those who would exalt him. Sages were declared to know the events of the past, for thousands of years, and to tell of the future for ten thousand generations. Their knowledge of all things came spontaneously, without any labor of learning. Upon seeing a thing for the first time, they knew all about it. Therefore, the sage was considered to be *shên,* "super-usual," "spiritual," by many persons (II, 114). Wang Ch'ung, the sceptic, does not believe that sages are *shên;* according to him they are ordinary men, but their powers of observation and inference are so phenomenally keen as to make it possible for them to accomplish the marvels of mind-reading, etc., for which they were known among the people. Wang conceived the sage as a sort of "super-Sherlock Holmes" (II, 117, 288, 289). Wang tells the following story, which he got from the *Tso Chuan*:

> Hearing a cow lowing (Ko Lu) said, "This cow has already had three calves, but they have all been taken away from her." Somebody asking how he knew this, he replied that her voice disclosed it. The man applied to the owner of the cow, and it was really as Ko Lu had said (II, 122-123).

[323] *Men.* 2(1),2,28.

On another occasion, Chan Ho heard a cow lowing outside the gate, and was able to tell that it was a black cow with whitened hoofs. But this, Wang thinks, was not such a great feat; why did not Chan Ho also tell who was its owner, and why its hoofs had been whitened? (II, 122). The *Lun Hêng* recounts such stories by the dozen.

Apocryphal legends concerning Confucius equal those surrounding Jesus, Mohammed, and Gautama. Although his lineage had been concealed from him, Confucius had only to blow the flute in order to discover all of the details of his ancestry (II, 115).[324] He was reputed to have been able to see a thousand *li* (more than three hundred miles) with the naked eye (II, 242). When he died, he left a book of prophecies, which came true (II, 114). His tomb was on the shore of the river Sse; when he was buried there, the waters of the river flowed backwards (II, 223, 251).

It was, of course, the aspiration of every educated man to be appointed to governmental office, and every family hoped that one or more of its members might attain this dignity. Such a happy event was supposed always to be foretold by omens (II, 25), and a regular system of these auguries was developed. A man predestined to office was believed to show his happy fate, in his countenance, from birth; he was a marked man (I, 131).

Any disaster befalling the people of a district was likely to be laid to the account of misconduct on the part of its officers. If tigers carried off a number of men, that was because the high commissioners were fleecing their subordinates, since, just as the tigers were fiercest of beasts, the high commissioners were the chiefs of the officers (II,357). Plagues of insects were considered to be caused by the misdeeds of officers; if the insects had black bodies and red heads, the military officers were to blame, but if the bodies were red and the heads black, then it was the civil officers who were the culprits. Wang says that when such visitations of insects occurred, the officers to blame were "flogged and maltreated, for the purpose of removing the calamity" (II,341,363). It is related that during the reign of P'ing Ti, 1-5 A.D., all of the districts of Honan province were ravaged by locusts, save only that one ruled by the

[324] It is interesting to remark that Wang uses a valid principle of literary criticism to discredit these tales. They are all built, he declares, after a few regular patterns taken from old legends (II,115).

magistrate Cho, which was spared because of the wisdom and virtue of its ruler (II,190).

The division of China into four quarters, by lines passing NE-SW and NW-SE, and the correspondence of the five *hsing* to these quarters and to the directions, provided the basis for many popular techniques of control. A citation will illustrate the way in which they were used:

> When people dig up the earth for the foundation of a building, the year-star and the moon will swallow something,[325] and on the land which they consume a case of death occurs. If *e.g.* the planet Jupiter is in the sign *tse* (the north), the year-star swallows up some land in the sign *yu* (the west), and if the moon in the first month stands in *yin* (east-north-east), it consumes some land in the sign *sse* (south-south-east). Some building being erected on land situated in *tse* and *yin*, people living in *yu* and *sse* are swallowed up, and being about to be thus injured, they have recourse to charms to counteract these influences, using objects made of the five *hsing*, and hanging up metal, wood, water, and fire. Should, for example, Jupiter and the moon infest a family living in the west, they would suspend metal,[326] and should those luminaries be going to devour a family in the east, this family would suspend charcoal.[327] Moreover, they institute sacrifices with a view to averting the evil, or they feign to change their residence, in order thus to eschew the calamity. There is unanimity about this, everyone doing like the others (II,387).

An objection which might be made to the foregoing study is that, whereas it pretends to be a description of popular ideas, it actually deals in large part with notions which were shared even by the emperors, the high officials, and the literati. The reply is that, while many of these theories and techniques were undoubtedly originated by men who had at least some smattering of book learning, there is little doubt that they were shared, at least in their fundamental premises, by the people, the peasants and the artisans. They do, then, present an accurate cross-section of a portion of the popular lore of the land.

Further, it must be remembered that in the China of the first century A.D. a man could be a member of the literati, an officer,

[325] *I.e.*, will cause a disaster. This idea probably springs from the belief in the sacredness of Earth (Cf.II,394,400).

[326] The *hsing* of the west.

[327] The element of the east is wood, and that of the south where the inimical luminaries are placed, while menacing the family, is fire. Charcoal is a combination of wood and fire (Forke's note).

or an emperor, without necessarily being a member of what we might call the "intelligentsia." Confucius, Mencius, and Mo Tse would have laughed at much of what has been recounted, but not every man who could write was "enlightened," in these latter days. In these times, it was more necessary that an emperor be a good military strategist and a good schemer, than that he be intellectually sophisticated. It will be recalled that the founder of the former Han dynasty rose to power as the leader of a bandit gang; this is not to say that he was not an able man, but it is well known that he was not a learned one. The Chinese court of these days was likely to be the headquarters for the diviners, soothsayers, and sorcerers of the nation.

Certain fundamental attitudes and conceptions lay behind these various techniques by means of which the common people were striving, not merely to live, but to live more securely, more happily, more abundantly. This inarticulate and incoherent folk-philosophy is not by any means identical with Sinism, that flower which was the product of the labors of centuries of intellectuals. But it will be noted that it does not conflict with Sinism, either, and that where the two impinge on each other they agree in the essentials. It is as if an illiterate man were trying, with the best of will but only the vaguest understanding, to comprehend the intricacies of a metaphysical system. Of course he exaggerates the marvelous powers of the sage, of course he makes Heaven very like a big man living in the sky—not from any intention to contradict or to offend, but because of too much zeal to agree.

It is not supposed, however, that Sinism first grew up, as a high philosophy, and then was taken over and vulgarized by the masses. It is rather the case that the attitudes grew up, by the process briefly sketched in the first part of this study, as a result of racial experience. Side by side, the popular and the more esoteric expressions of this national philosophy developed.

It is this fundamental agreement between the ideas of the common people, on the one hand, and those of the high philosophers, on the other, which provides the most certain evidence that Sinism was not the chance creation of a handful of Chinese intellectuals led by Confucius, but that it was rather the expression, in philosophical form, of the historically-evolved world-view of the Chinese people.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

THE foregoing pages have been devoted to two tasks. The first of these was to demonstrate the existence, in pre-Buddhist China, of a peculiarly and distinctively Chinese world-view, which has been called Sinism. The second undertaking was to trace the development of this thought-pattern, from its beginnings in the prehistoric time down through the period of the great philosophers to the first century A.D. This concluding chapter has two purposes, likewise: first, to run briefly over that earlier story, and second, to look ahead a bit in order to gain some idea of how Sinism fared later.

Sinism has been characterized as a philosophy of the most intense provincialism. The people who espoused it have been distinguished by the vices and the virtues which attend provincialism everywhere. Its vices, such as narrowness and lack of receptivity to new ideas, are universally acknowledged; the virtues of provincialism, the steadiness of character and the social solidarity which usually accompany it, are not often recognized as they deserve to be. Be that as it may, the nature of Sinism leads us to suspect, with good reason, that its origin is to be sought in the little agricultural communities of which very early China was composed.

Here we find conditions well calculated to give rise to the elements of the later philosophy. The grouping into large families made imperative that recognition of a fixed status for each individual, and that rigid definition of reciprocal rights and duties, which have been the hallmark of Chinese social organization ever since. The predominantly agricultural economy placed a premium on order and regularity in the way of life of the people, and caused them to postulate order and regularity in the cosmic processes as the highest good, since that was a necessary prelude to a good har-

vest. As in any small, self-contained community with few contacts, ethical regularity was stressed to the extreme.

In the next step (logically, not chronologically), ethical regularity and cosmic regularity are felt to be one, precisely as man is not sharply differentiated from the rest of the universe. Cosmic irregularities are believed to be caused by ethical or ritual irregularities on the part of men (in such a state of culture, ritual irregularities *are* ethical missteps, of course). The great ideal, then, is regularity, order, Harmony.

But in such a thought-world as the Chinese it is process (as, the rotation of the seasons) which is stressed; perfection is a dynamic, not a static ideal. Harmony, as the *summum bonum,* must be a highway to follow, not a temple in which to stop. The highest ideal, then, is the *tao,* "the way," "the road," or "the path." Such an ideal was perfectly adapted to be the guiding star of the monarchy, when it came into being.

For the monarch, the prime duty was to follow the *tao,* the cosmically sanctioned mode of action. So long as he did this, he properly filled the station of king, and was approved and supported by Heaven. When he failed to do this, he ceased to be king, in fact if not in form, and Heaven was certain, sooner or later, to replace him with another who would follow the right path. Inevitably this brought to the fore, in the historical period, the pressing necessity of defining the *tao.* The *tao* was, to be sure, sanctioned by Heaven, but the *Classics* themselves tell us that "Heaven does not speak."

It was generally agreed that in the vague but glorious past certain sage kings had followed the *tao* perfectly, and as a result, all had gone well with the world. It was, therefore, a very logical and a very widespread idea that the proper procedure was, first, to learn all that could be discovered of the ways of these former kings, and then to apply these, as rigidly as common sense would allow, in the practice of government. Confucius was not the first to advocate this, but he was able, by his outstanding "human" qualities, his fund of practical judgment, and his greatness of character, to focus upon it the attention of his own and future ages. What was perhaps even more important, he carefully collected and edited the historical documents and so made it possible more easily to know what had been the accepted usages.

It must be borne in mind that, for Confucius, the ultimate value of this approved way of behavior (which regulated every action of man, from the issuance of governmental edicts to the cut and color of clothing) lay, not primarily in the fact that it had proved successful in the past, but in the fact that it accorded with the cosmic "way." The way of the righteous kings and the way of Heaven were in perfect accord. The former was contained in the latter. Society, being an intimate and integral part of the universe as a whole, would prosper when it was adjusted to that universe so as to be in perfect harmony with its fundamental principles. Mencius, Confucius' most famous disciple, holds the same metaphysical position. But Hsün Tse, although he is called a Confucianist, looked at the matter from quite a different point of view.

Hsün Tse leaves the metaphysics almost entirely to one side. For him, the validation of the methods of the ancient sage-kings lay, not in their correspondence to a cosmic norm, but in the fact that, according to history, they had *gotten results* in the past. According to the records, those kings who had followed the approved way had also been the kings whose reigns were most prosperous. For this reason Hsün Tse was willing to follow their example, but with the qualification that methods were to be checked experimentally and improved, as experience indicated, to meet new conditions. To this, Confucius could not have agreed, for his ultimate standard was cosmic, and outside the historical process.[328] Hsün Tse went a step further: He read his own pragmatic rationalism back into Confucius, and explained away the metaphysical teachings of the Master as mere concessions to the need of his ignorant contemporaries for specific and absolutistic moral guidance. This latter was a popular teaching, for the masses; the esoteric doctrine of Confucius, we are told, was identical with the teachings of Hsün Tse. This interpretation of Confucius has gained such vogue that it may perhaps be said to be dominant today, in the West as well as in the Orient, and this despite the fact that Hsün Tse himself was declared unorthodox by the Confucian school.

[328] The situation may perhaps be illustrated by Christianity. The Confucian position corresponds roughly, on this point, to that of certain Protestants, who, while they are willing to admit a certain progressive revelation of truth in the Old Testament, believe that with the Christ the revelation became complete, so that nothing may be added, except perhaps in the way of commentary. The experimental position of Hsün Tse is represented, in Christianity, only by a few members of the extreme left.

This ban was imposed because Hsün Tse taught that human nature was bad. He lived in an age of bloodshed and disorder, such a period as was well-calculated to destroy the faith of a thinker in his fellow men. This mistrust led Hsün Tse to forfeit all the positive values of his experimental program, and to condemn all original thinking on the part of the scholar, confining him rather to a slavish handing down of the words of his teacher. This recommendation of Hsün Tse was carried out by a large part of the Confucian school.

That it broke up this rigid traditionalism is perhaps the chief glory of the school of thought founded by that most brilliant and original thinker, Lao Tse. An older contemporary of Confucius, he was also a metaphysical Sinist. He, too, sought to put into practice the cosmic *tao*. Like Confucius, he looked back to an older period when, under the ancient sage-kings, men lived in harmony, peace, and plenty. But Lao Tse belonged, not to the governing class, but to that group which had charge of the records, and the books of divination. The orderly and resistless working of the cosmic forces, the ultimate harmony of the universe, the *tao*, bulked large in his thinking. All agreed that the necessary thing was for society to be in harmony with this cosmic process. Then why not, asked Lao Tse, simply let the *tao* work itself out in society, without hindrance? Why make and enforce rules? Why attempt, with the puny intelligence of men, to aid the mighty principle of all existence, when these attempts were certain merely to make matters worse? *Laissez-faire!*

It was precisely this policy of "hands off" which constituted the governmental program, and brought about the prosperity, of the ancient sage-kings, Lao Tse held. The duty of modern kings then, was to do likewise, and occupy themselves in meditating on the *tao*. So far, Lao Tse carries out the logic of his position. But to follow the *tao* was, in the truest sense, to be natural. Confucius, like every other man who has advocated a return to the state of nature, took upon himself the duty and the right to define the "state of nature." Lao Tse did the same. In practice, then, he advocated that books and writings be discarded, travel be discouraged, the use of arms prohibited, etc. Finally, Lao Tse espoused a system of strict regulation similar in quality, if not in content, to that of Confucius.

Mo Tse was a thorough Sinist. His thinking was so similar

to that of Confucius and Mencius that his essential philosophy is identical with theirs. Certain differences in his teachings with regard to peripheral details of practice led to bitter enmity between him and the Confucianists, however, so that he has been registered in history as having a philosophy in direct opposition to that of Confucius. But this interpretation does not stand up under critical investigation.

Sinism has been represented as a typical Chinese world-view. We have been treating, however, of the intellectuals alone. Evidence regarding them leaves open two possibilities, first, that Sinism might have been originated by some single member of the learned class, and handed down from him, or, second, that it might have been imported into China and preserved within the literary circle. Investigation of popular beliefs and practices shows, however, that the common people as well were thoroughly impregnated with Sinism. As we should expect, there is not, in these folkways, the clear and consistent following out of philosophical patterns which we find among the intellectuals; nevertheless, the prevalence of the Sinistic world-view is plain. Here is an important piece of corroborative evidence that Sinism is properly so-called, and is a genuinely Chinese entity.

The history of Sinism after the first century A.D. is beyond the purview of this study, and no attempt to write it will be made here. That history is a subject for future research. It is not out of place, however, to indicate certain directions in which such investigation may fruitfully be carried on.

It is not to be thought that scepticism concerning the beautiful cosmic order of Sinism, with its inevitable "poetic justice," was rare. We have seen that Hsün Tse did not believe in it, and he was not alone, even in his own period. The school of Legalists (which has not been treated because of lack of space), represented by such men as Wei Yang and Han Fei Tse, believed that "a single law, enforced by severe penalties, is worth more for the maintenance of order than all the words of all the sages." Wang Hu, a Laoist politician of the "Warring Kingdoms" period, preached a political opportunism reminiscent of Machiavelli; he declared that the metaphysical sanctions of morality had been invented, by the rulers of the past, as a means of compelling obedience. This type of thinking continued among some of the intellectuals, due in considerable

measure to the influence of Hsün Tse. Hsün Yüeh (148-209 A.D.) went so far as to assert that virtue had no effect whatsoever on a man's destiny, unless in a purely naturalistic way, as, for instance, that it caused him to have fewer enemies. Again, there is recorded the case of the Emperor Chên of the Sung dynasty, who "arranged" omens of the approved type, to strengthen his prestige, after a minister had convinced him that the "holy" emperors of the past had followed the same sophisticated practice. Such instances were probably numerous, but records of them are, naturally, rare.

On the other hand, an unquestioning faith in the old metaphysics probably remained the rule. The compiler of the literary index of the Han dynasty reaffirmed the old dogma that those who were good would prosper, and those who were evil were thwarted, in all their designs, by the ever-watchful Heaven. The Neo-Confucianists, of whom the leading representative was Chu Hsi, are anathematized by Wieger as "atheists and materialists," yet they too preserve the belief in a cosmos the ideal of which is harmony, and a human society which is an intimate part of that cosmos, and whose ideal state is harmony with the cosmic *tao*. Their "materialism" does not appear (at least upon the basis of the writer's study of it) to differ from that "physical monism" which was prevalent even in the time of Confucius, and probably before that. It is this Neo-Confucianism which has dominated the Confucian school down to the present.

Wieger's asssertion that they were non-theists is more to the point. "Heaven" had come to be looked upon, more and more, as a principle—sometimes even a subjective principle—and less and less as an anthropopathic being. But even this was not necessarily a movement away from the fundamental principles of Sinism. The basic element of that philosophy is the existence and the working of the metaphysical unity of the cosmos, not the particular agents through which its influence is felt. In the phrase "the *tao* of Heaven," the important factor is *tao,* not "Heaven."

Confucius was practical, not speculative. The later members of the Confucian school gave a great deal of attention to speculation, however, and as they did so their philosophy became more and more similar to that of the most speculative of all Sinists, Lao Tse. This was due in part, beyond doubt, to direct Laoist influence, but it was also due to the fact that similar minds, in both Confucian and

Laoist schools, started with the same premises for speculation. As a result, passages of the writings of certain Neo-Confucianists look as if they might have come from the hand of Lao Tse himself. It will be recalled that Lao Tse's *Tao Tê King* leaves little real place for Heaven, except as a figurehead. Buddhist thought also played an important part in influencing Confucianist speculation.

The fortunes of the Confucianists, since the time of the founder, have been marked by great vicissitude. On a few occasions, massacres have wiped out a large proportion of their number. Yet they have always come back to at least a considerable degree of power. The reason for this is not apparent, if, as has been held, they are a little group which has merely handed down the invented teachings of a single historical master. The fact would seem to be, rather, that their basic philosophy, Sinism, has its roots deep in the historic past and the present attitudes of the Chinese people. A further fact which leads to this conclusion is that, even during the periods when Buddhist emperors ruled China, the state cult has always been Confucian.

A most interesting and important field for research concerns the influence of Sinism on Chinese Buddhism. Sacrifices to Heaven have been incorporated in the Buddhist ordination services, and other externals of the indigenous religion have been taken over bodily. According to Reichelt, in the large and important "Pure Land" school "China's ancient and powerful conception of the 'way' or the 'life principle' (*tao* 道), found its way into Buddhism."[329]

Sinism has much in common with the philosophical genius of the modern West. Its physical theory has more in common with our own than does that of Medieval Europe. Its basic principle, that human happiness and prosperity is the result of a proper adjustment of man to his environment, does not quarrel with modern social science. Above all, its thorough-going humanistic temper strikes the note of our own time.

Sinism is the supreme philosophical expression of one of the major divisions, and one of the most important cultures, of the human race. This study is contributed toward the further preservation of its history.

[329] Karl Ludwig Reichelt, *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* (tr. from the Norwegian), p. 130.

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